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MODEL ESSAYS

WITH OUTLINES

FOR

ENTRANCE AND FIRST ARTS
CANDIDATES

BY

F. J. ROWE, M.A.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE,
PRESIDENCY COLLEGE, CALCUTTA.

AND

NIL KANTHA MAJUMDAR, M.A.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE,
PRESIDENCY COLLEGE, CALCUTTA.



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• PREFACE.

THIS little book is to some extent a new departure, being an attempt to present, in language such as an English student would use, ideas such as would most readily occur to an Indian student's mind on everyday subjects. Accordingly, the first draft of these Essays was entirely the work of the Indian editor, the revision (involving in a few cases the re-writing of the Essay) that of the English editor. Thus, it is hoped, there will be found in the Essays few, if any, ideas foreign to the Indian way of thinking, which on many subjects must differ rather widely from the English way. This difference makes some model essays, written by Englishmen for Indian students, by no means easy for an Indian student's mind to grasp.

The subjects treated of in this book have been chosen from among those commonplace themes that are most frequently found in the examination papers on English set at Entrance or First Arts, Matriculation or Pre-^{liminary} examinations of Universities in India. The style has been purposely made as easy and straightforward as possible; and the thoughts have been restricted to those general ideas which are all that can be reasonably expected from a young student, when called upon to write an essay offhand in the short space of time which can be devoted in the examination hall to one question out of many in a paper.

It will be found that some attempt at graduation according to difficulty of subject has been made, and that the first fifty subjects are easier and more suited for Entrance or Matriculation candidates than the latter fifty, many of which, indeed, have

been taken from questions actually set in First Arts or Previous examination papers.

In using this book, a student is recommended first to choose a subject from the Index, and to write down in the order in which they occur to him any ideas he may have on the subject. These ideas should then be arranged in some sort of logical sequence, so as to make a rough outline of the intended essay. This outline should then be compared with that given in the Table of Outlines prefixed to the Essays, and should, if necessary, be amended by the help of the model outline. The essay should now be written with the guidance of the amended outline. It is not necessary to adhere quite strictly to those ideas only which appear in the outline : probably some few fresh ideas will suggest themselves in the course of writing the essay : these may be inserted in their proper place in the outline, and treated of at full length in the essay. After completing the writing out, the writer should carefully revise his essay, paying particular attention to grammar, carelessness in which so frequently loses a candidate many of the marks which his composition, otherwise good, would have gained. After this revision of his own work, the writer should turn to the corresponding essay given in the book and see if he cannot improve his attempt by the aid of the model before him.

A few general remarks upon Essay-writing in the examination hall may here be added. Reckoning that, out of the three hours generally allowed for the whole question paper, not more than half an hour at the outside should be devoted to the essay question, it is important for a candidate to have a clear idea of how that half hour should be divided. To a young student the most difficult point, and one over which he is apt to lose a great deal of precious time, is often the endeavour to guess how the examiner wishes a subject to be treated, and what line of thought will obtain the most marks. This is going on a wrong tack. What an examiner wants in a candidate's essay is something to show that the candidate has *some* ideas on the subject, and that he can express those ideas in fairly idiomatic and completely grammatical form. As a fact, in entrance or previous examination essay answers, the *matter* is of less importance than the *manner*, the questions being framed more with a view to elicit the candidate's power of expression in the English language than the extent of his reading or the depth of his reflections. More marks will be gained by commonplace thoughts,

PREFACE.

if correctly expressed, than by an ungrammatical and ill-spelt presentation of profound or original ideas. It follows, then, that but a very short time should be spent in selecting one out of the three or four subjects that are generally prescribed for the examinee to choose from. As a rule, not more than two minutes should be spent over this choice; and, if the candidate thinks them all equally easy or equally hard, let him take the subject that stands first in order in the question paper. When the subject is once chosen and an outline attempted, it is generally a mistake, and always a serious loss of time, to change it for another subject. The same course should now be followed as has been laid down above for forming an outline. When the ideas have been arranged in logical sequence and numbered, any illustrations of the different ideas should be noted down in brief, each under its proper number. The construction of the outline is a most important part of the work, and from six to eight minutes may profitably be devoted to it. When some five or six ideas, each in its numbered paragraph, have been written down, with illustrations attached, the material for writing the essay is complete.

The expansion of the outline into a connected form, in other words, the writing out of the essay, should occupy fifteen minutes of the twenty minutes still remaining.

The last five minutes should be spent in careful revision of the grammar and spelling, sentence by sentence. Especial care should be taken to see that the verbs are of the same number as their subjects, singular verbs joined to plural subjects being one of the commonest mistakes in junior candidates' essays.

The following rules, applicable to all answers of examination questions, are of special importance in an essay:—

(1) Let your writing be *easy to read*.

(2) Let your writing be *neat* and free from smudges and blots.

(3) Keep the lines about half an inch apart.

(4) Keep a clear margin of about an inch and a half on the left of the answer paper. This margin is easily defined by doubling the paper back so as to leave a straight crease.

- (5) If a word be blotted or misspelt, cross it out by two horizontal lines through the middle of the letters, and write the word out clearly again above the crossed-out word.
- (6) Keep the words distinct from each other.
- (7) Keep a clear space of two inches between the end of the essay and the beginning of the next answer.

F. J. R.

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OUTLINES OF THE ESSAYS.

I. THE ADVANTAGES OF PASSING THE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION.

1. Inability to pass blights the prospects of life.
2. Failure shuts out a man from high or liberal education.
3. He cannot even join a profession.
4. He can hardly secure any respectable or lucrative situation.
5. He is not even considered eligible for marriage.

II. A JOURNEY BY BOAT ON AN INDIAN RIVER.

1. Description of the boat, its crew, oars, deck, punt-poles, coil of rope, and so on.
2. The landscapes on the two sides of the Ganges.
3. The difficulties of sailing up stream.

III. THE DURGA PUJA FESTIVAL.

1. This is called *the* Puja, because it excels all other Pujas in importance.
2. Its origin.
3. The appearance and dress of the goddess and her children.
4. The first day of the Puja : the *Kalabow*, the *pushpanjali*, the *balidan*, and the *arati*.
5. The three other days of the Puja.
6. The banquets and the entertainments.
7. The *Bisaryan* and the *Bijaya*.

IV. AN INDIAN JUNGLE.

1. The trees tall and of wide girth.
2. The important trees : the teak, the banyan, the *peepul*.
3. The denizens of the forest : the tiger, the elephant, the antelope.
4. Various kinds of wild birds.
5. Jungles visited by men for various purposes.
6. Anecdotes.

MODEL ESSAYS

V. A RIVER.

1. A river serves many important purposes, *e.g.*, drainage, the supply of pure drinking water, irrigation, commerce.
2. A river's beauty in spring and summer.
3. A river's fury and destructiveness during the rains.

VI. BODILY EXERCISE.

1. Health cannot be preserved without bodily exercise.
2. Different forms of bodily exercise, *e.g.*, walking, riding, brandishing clubs, danda, out-door games.
3. Out-door games to be preferred to all, for they afford a mental stimulus and unite profit with pleasure.

VII. THE RAINY SEASON.

1. General appearance of the sky; the nature of the wind during the rainy season.
2. Description of a thunder-storm.
3. Floods and inundations. Their disadvantages and advantages.
4. The rainy season heralds the approach of malarious fevers.

VIII. THE HOT SEASON.

1. The great intensity of heat. The languor, lassitude, and discomfort which men endure during the midday.
2. The soft and gentle breeze of the evening affording very great relief.
3. How people spend the night and how they sleep.
4. Summer a healthy season for the malaria-stricken inhabitants of Bengal.
5. Summer the season for fruits of delicious flavour.

IX. LEARNING TO SWIM.

1. The advantages and the necessity of learning to swim.
2. It is very easy to learn swimming. The process of swimming described.
3. Some instances of great swimmers.
4. Swimming a very favourite exercise among the Romans.

X. THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.

1. Its manifold advantages.
2. Its mechanism and machinery.
3. The telegraph a great help in our domestic concerns.
4. The uses of the telegraph in war and in politics.
5. The whole world is brought closely together by the telegraph.

XI. SNAKES.

1. Description of a snake, its teeth, its poison-bag, and its poison-fangs.
2. Death from a snake-bite described.
3. Snakes devour their prey whole and entire.
4. Cunning, malice—and ferocity attributed to snakes, partly on account of their appearance, and partly on account of their deadly bite.
5. The place of the serpent in fables and legends.

XII. THE SNAKE-CHARMER.

1. His appearance and dress.
2. His tricks :
 - (a) The serpent's play.
 - (b) His apparent immunity from snake-bite.
 - (c) He brings out serpents from the most unlikely places.
 - (d) He catches serpents with wonderful pluck.
3. He pretends to know more than he really does, and he enjoys the confidence of his customers.

XIII. THE COW.

1. To a Hindu the cow is a divinity. She is the impersonation of the goddess Durga.
2. The cow is eminently useful ; but her usefulness has certainly not invested her with the attributes of a goddess.
3. Cows are degenerating as a species. Why ?
4. Cows unfortunately the occasion of kindling race-animosity between the Hindu and the Mahomedan.

XIV. THE COLD WEATHER HOLIDAYS.

1. Distinctive feature—out-door games.
2. Morning spent in idle lounging, gossip, or in the organisation of clubs, reading-rooms and similar useful institutions.
3. The midday bath in the river.
4. The out-door games.
5. The evening spent in gossip or in discussions.

XV. DESCRIPTION OF AN OUT-DOOR GAME

(*Haduguda*).

1. The play-ground and the selection of players.
2. How the players kill, and how they are killed.
3. Wherein lies victory and wherein defeat.
4. The advantages and the cheapness of the game.

XVI. THE SCHOOL AT WHICH I STUDY, &c.

1. How the school is maintained.
2. The situation of the school and the staff.
3. The school-building and its inside.
4. My mother took me to her father's house, where my grandfather made much of me.

XVII. THE SEASONS IN INDIA.

1. Summer and its intense and fierce heat.
2. The rainy season with its floods and inundations.
3. The autumn ; its ripe fruits, its plentiful harvest, and its fitting clouds.
4. The winter—a pleasant and agreeable season. Its out-door games.
5. The spring—a season of love and joy. The beauties of nature.

XVIII. THE MANUFACTURE OF SILK.

1. The appearance and habits of silk-worms.
2. How silk is woven.
3. The cocoon, the caterpillar and the moth.
4. Silk in former times was manufactured, in India and China.
It is now manufactured in Europe.
5. Silk industry declining in India.

XIX. REIGN OF AKBAR.

1. Earlier career consisting chiefly of military expeditions.
2. Consolidation and internal pacification of the empire.
3. The key-note of Akbar's policy.
4. His efforts to secure moral progress and reform.
5. His religious neutrality.

XX. THE GAMES OF INDIAN SCHOOL-BOYS.

1. "Hide-and-Seek" described in detail.
2. The *Nuncote* or Salt Go-down.
3. The *Dandaguli* or the Rod and the Bar ; resembling the game of cricket.
4. Indian compared with English games. The latter are supplanting the former.

XXI. KINDNESS TO ANIMALS.

1. More talked about than practised.
2. The forms of cruelty most prevalent in this country.

3. Men are cruel to men. How can they then be kind to animals?
4. It is as truly cruel to ill-treat an animal as to ill-treat a man.
5. We ought to be grateful and not cruel to animals for we are under great obligations to them.

XXII. A HINDU MARRIAGE.

1. The marriage procession.
2. The reception at the bride's house.
3. Exchange of witticisms between the bridegroom's party and the bride's party.
4. The marriage-contract between the bridegroom and the bride's father.
5. The *Basar-ghar* or the Room for the wedding night.
6. *Kushandika* or the solemn Marriage-contract between the bridegroom and the bride.

XXIII. AN INDIAN TEMPLE.

1. The situation and the architectural peculiarities of the temple.
2. The temple of Bishweswar at Benares.
3. An Indian temple a very useful and benevolent institution.

XXIV. RICE : ITS CULTIVATION, ETC.

1. The two kinds of rice *aus*, *aman*. How and when sown. When reaped.
2. The processes of cultivation : Manuring, ploughing, harrowing, sowing, weeding and transplanting, described in detail.
3. The natural calamities that interfere with the growth of rice.
4. The processes after reaping the harvest : Threshing, tramping, winnowing, husking, and cooking, described in detail.

XXV. THE COCOANUT.

1. Its beauty.
2. Its utility.
3. The cocoanut a large source of income.
4. Where does it grow?

XXVI. THEATRES.

1. A theatre is above all a source of pleasure and amusement.
2. But a theatre may inspire noble virtues, and may be a means of correcting vices and absurdities.
3. The modern theatres of Bengal often defiled by immorality and obscenity. This is due to a want of moral training among the audience.

XXVII. A CYCLONE.

1. Its meaning and nature. How it begins and how it ends.
2. The ravages and the devastations committed by a cyclone.
3. The advantages of a cyclone.

XXVIII. TRAVELLING.

1. Travelling a part of our education. Many of the wisest teachers of all times have been travellers.
2. He who never travels has a slavish attachment for even the foolish and absurd customs of his country.
3. Every nation can teach us something.
4. The advantages of visiting historical scenes.
5. The advantages of observing nature in her various aspects.

XXIX. THE RACES INHABITING INDIA.

1. The characteristics of the non-Aryans.
2. Their names, abodes, habits, and customs.
3. The Aryans: their complexion, habits, and customs.

XXX. ASIATIC AND EUROPEAN DRESS.

1. Details of the articles of Asiatic dress as found in the lower, the middle, and the higher classes.
2. Dress of women of the three classes.
3. Official dress in India.
4. European costume: unsuited to the requirements of the country.

XXXI. THE FUNERAL RITES OF THE HINDUS.

1. The rites immediately before death.
2. How the corpse is carried to the burning ghat.
3. The ceremonies previous to cremation.
4. The cremation.
5. The *Shradhs*.
6. The uncleanness and the purification different in different castes.

XXXII. EARTHQUAKES.

1. The physical cause—the cooling of the Earth's burning mass.
2. A description of the usual scenes before and during an earthquake.
3. How to secure shelter and security during an earthquake.
4. The Hindu popular myths concerning an earthquake.

XXXIII. TIGERS.

1. Their habits, their strength and their size.
2. Their appearance; their manner of seizing their prey.
3. Tame tigers; how fed and how kept under control.
4. Tigers can swim. Anecdote.
5. Tiger-hunting.

XXXIV. INDIAN FRUITS AND FLOWERS.

1. Nature very beautiful in India. Reference to Goldsmith's description of Italy in *The Traveller*.
2. Remarkable flowers — champak, lotus, bakul, kamini shephalika, etc.
3. Notable fruits—mango, jack, pomegranate, etc.

XXXV. PUNDIT ISWARA CHANDRA VIDYASAGARA.

1. General statement of his claims on our gratitude.
2. He was the "Father of Bengali Prose."
3. He popularised Sanskrit Literature.
4. His efforts for social reforms.
5. His charities.
6. A brief summary of his life and works.

XXXVI. DWELLING-HOUSES, NATIVE AND EUROPEAN.

1. The dwelling-house and its furniture among the peasants, the shop-keepers, the Bhadrалока and the rich.
2. Dwelling-houses of the natives considered from a sanitary point of view.
3. European dwelling-houses: their superiority in elegance, cleanliness, comfort and sanitation.

XXXVII. UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS.

1. The names and nature of University Examinations.
2. Success no longer a passport to wealth, fame or honour.
3. We study not so much for the sake of knowledge as for ulterior advantages.
4. Want of originality in University graduates accounted for.

XXXVIII. THE BAZAR IN AN INDIAN VILLAGE.

1. The open square and the stalls around it.
2. The temporary stalls of the fisherwoman, the vegetable-seller, the tobacconist, and the betel-leaf-seller.
3. The permanent stalls of the grocer, the cloth-merchant and the bania.
4. An Indian bazar, the truest mirror of village life.

XXXIX. ECLIPSES.

1. Why are eclipses regarded as inauspicious by orthodox Hindus?
2. The rites observed to purge away the sin of witnessing an eclipse.
3. The mythological legends to explain the origin of an eclipse.
4. The scientific explanation must have been well-known to Hindu astronomers.

XL. HOLIDAYS AND HOW TO SPEND THEM.

1. The original intention and the modern use of a holiday.
2. Some turn their holidays into working days. This practice condemned.
3. The best way of employing our leisure hours; congenial study, travelling and making scientific tours and excursions.
4. Sports and amusements; excess in this to be avoided.

XLI. THE INDIAN CROW.

1. The ugliness of its appearance and movements.
2. Its greediness.
3. Its cry dissonant and ominous.
4. Fables and anecdotes.

XLII. THE TELEPHONE.

1. Sound, how produced.
2. Construction of telephone.
3. Applied to practical purposes in India.
4. Its future.

XLIII. THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS OF BENGAL.

1. Paddy and other cereal crops, such as wheat and barley.
2. The green crops or pulses, such as grain, peas, etc.
3. Oil-seeds, such as mustard, linseed, etc.
4. Vegetables, such as potato, brinjal, pumpkin, etc.
5. The rotation of crops in Bengal in the course of a year.
6. The out-turn of crops, and the condition of the Bengal peasant.

XLIV. HINDU CASTES AND THEIR SUBDIVISION.

1. Six important castes now in Bengal, viz. — Brahmans, Khetrys, Baidyas, Kayasthas, Bhats, and Acharyas. Their present occupations.
2. The Nabashaks, *i.e.*, Barlurs, potters, etc. They are castes from whom Brahmans can take water without loss of caste.
3. The inferior castes such as fishermen, wine-sellers, etc.
4. Subdivisions of castes determined by localities.

XLV. THE SAUNYASI.

1. His appearance, dress and habits.
2. His *Joga*. Instances of occult powers acquired by such Joga.
3. Anecdote of a saunyasi dug from the jungles of the Sundarbaus.

XLVI. THE INDIAN CUCKOO.

1. Its appearance and movements.
2. Its melodious voice. The praise bestowed upon it by English and Sanskrit poets.
3. The cuckoo is a migratory bird : the time when it comes and the time when it goes.
4. Its habits.

XLVII. INDIAN JUGGLERS.

1. Ihn Batuta mentions the wonderful trick of a man sitting unsupported in the air.
2. The trick of mysterious disappearance.
3. The Rupee changed into a franc-piece and the latter changed into a dollar.
4. The watch tricks of Hassan Khan.

XLVIII. FISHES AND FISHERMEN.

1. The castes that live by fishing.
2. Fish consumed by almost all classes of Bengalis.
3. The principal varieties of fish. How they are caught.
4. The habits of fishermen and fisherwomen.
5. Qualities of fish as an article of food.

XLIX. ELEPHANTS.

1. Appearance and habits.
2. Elephants in a wild state.
3. Elephants now caught by *cookery*.
4. Instances of the sagacity of elephants.

L. SOME BENGALI PROVERBS AND THEIR WISDOM.

1. Proverbs the wisdom of many and the wit of one.
2. Examples.

LI. HOME.

1. The charms and enjoyments of the domestic fireside.
2. The joys of home compared with the other joys of life.
3. Homes are schools for acquiring noble virtues.
4. The pleasant associations of home.
5. The real charms of home heightened by imagination.

LII. SELF-DENIAL.

1. Self-denial means the subjection of those appetites and passions which stand in the way of our moral and spiritual progress.
2. Our higher nature ought to be developed in preference to our lower nature.
3. The *good* is to be sought in preference to the *agreeable*.
4. Religious teachers who have taught self-denial: Christ, Buddha, Chaitanya and others.
5. Self-denial is the key-note of Hindu civilisation.

LIII. THE POSTAL SYSTEM.

1. The old way in which letters were sent from place to place.
2. The convenience, cheapness, and rapidity of the modern method.
3. The various branches of the postal system: the money-order, the savings bank, the registration, and various other departments.
4. The post office gives us more than our money's worth. And it is as beneficial to the people as it is useful to the Government.
5. The postal department is managed mainly by Natives of India, on whose character and intelligence it reflects great credit.

LIV. MAKING THE BEST OF THINGS.

1. What this means and implies.
2. The ability to take a cheerful view of all that affects us is a mark of a lofty and powerful mind.
3. A cheerful man is saved from a great deal of unnecessary misery.
4. It is more profitable to turn to account what we have than to lament over what we have not.
5. We can never have all that we wish for. Nor can all things happen to suit our tastes. We must, therefore, learn to be content with what God has given us.
6. Southey's account of a man who made the best of things.

LV. OBEDIENCE TO PARENTS.

1. A father is (to a Hindu) an object of reverent worship.
2. Obedience to parents is enjoined on all by religion, by morality, and by law.
3. Filial love is not a natural instinct, like parental affection.
* But yet it ought to be very carefully cultivated.
4. Not to love our parents is the basest ingratitude.
5. When a father proves unworthy, we ought not to cease to love and honour him.

LVI. PUNCTUALITY.

1. Original meaning and modern use of the word.
2. This is an important virtue, implying method and self-control.
3. Instances of disasters caused by want of punctuality.
4. If a man is punctual, he will not have to complain of want of time.
5. Punctuality is a mark of politeness and of delicate regard for the comfort and convenience of others.

LVII. TRUTHFULNESS.

1. Truth is of two kinds : truth of character and truth of word.
2. Truth alone endures ; for nothing else can stand the test of time.
3. Lying is hard work. He who tells a lie needs twenty others to support it.
4. No society can subsist without truth. Truth gives confidence, and is the foundation of moral virtues.
5. A liar is past all hope.
6. Instances of truthful men among ancient Hindus.

LVIII. FRIENDSHIP.

1. Definition. The praises bestowed upon it by Addison, Goldsmith, and Sanskrit poets.
2. Friendship was a stronger tie in old days than it is now.
3. Friendship is a natural instinct.
4. The springs of friendship.
5. If we wish to retain friends, we must practise great forbearance.

LIX. DEATH.

1. Death a greater mystery than life.
2. Death a law of nature. All things die. Nothing dies without bringing into existence something greater, happier and brighter than itself.

3. It is curious to reflect that we consider all but ourselves mortal.
4. He who has his eyes fixed on death will find it easier to live a good life.
5. Our whole life ought to be a preparation for death.

LX. A TASTE FOR READING.

1. Learning and wealth compared.
2. Books are our best friends and companions.
3. The taste for reading should be cultivated in our youth.
4. We must not become book-worms.
5. Worthless books to be avoided as poison.

LXI. WHERE THERE IS A WILL THERE IS A WAY.

1. Courage, resolution, and perseverance will move mountains.
2. Sometimes life-long labour is rewarded with scanty success. But here it is either not earnest or ill-directed.
3. Examples from history to illustrate the truth of the proverb.
4. God helps those who help themselves.

LXII. THE INFLUENCE OF GOOD EXAMPLE.

1. Example is better than precept. The former appeals to the eye and the latter to the ear.
2. Example proves belief in man's own precepts.
3. The force of example illustrated from history and biography.
4. The son takes after the father. A nation is saved by ten good men.
5. Even records of noble lives do us good.

LXIII. INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE ON CHARACTER.

1. Passions and emotions morbidly ardent in hot climates; occasional fits of nobility, but no steady moral progress.
2. In very cold climates men lead a lethargic life and show few signs of refinement or culture.
3. Temperate climate favourable to the growth of moral greatness.
4. Imagination is fostered by hot climates and reason by temperate climates. In a very cold climate neither the one nor the other flourishes.
5. Energy in temperate climates; depression and despair in very cold climates; idleness in hot climates.

LXIV. CASTES.

1. Castes sanctioned by the Vedas.
2. The duties and the responsibilities of each caste.
3. Some attribute all our misfortunes to caste. Some represent caste as a source of many and great blessings.
4. Advantages of the caste system : division of labour, employment for all, the setting up of different ideals.
5. Disadvantages : interference with individual freedom of action.
6. Caste-restrictions now limited to food and inter-marriage.

LXV. CHARITY.

1. Charity embraces a variety of virtues.
2. Its true definition—Peace on earth and goodwill to man.
3. Examples of charity.
4. Exercise of charity is within the reach of all.

LXVI. NEWSPAPERS.

1. Originally the organs of the Government.
2. First started in England during the Invasion of the Spanish Armada.
3. A newspaper now performs the functions of a teacher, and it helps to form opinions on all subjects.
4. In India newspapers have a very delicate and difficult task. They are mediators and interpreters between the governors and the governed.

LXVII. POLITENESS.

1. Definition. Memorable examples in Europe and Asia.
2. Politeness—what it springs from and the virtues it implies and involves.
3. Good men often remarkable for politeness.
4. Politeness sometimes a cloak for treachery and hypocrisy.
5. Politeness sometimes wanting in really good men.
6. Absurdities of politeness when carried to excess.

LXVIII. FEMALE EDUCATION.

1. This bids fair to be popular and to become universal.
2. Female education still very elementary in this country ; but yet it enables many to earn their livelihood. This will make it popular.
3. The little learning which our females now receive tends to make them sensitive and proud.
4. Bankim Chandra created and guided a taste for reading among our females.

LXIX. INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS.

1. Popular fallacies concerning their importance.
2. The primary objects intended to be served.
3. They discourage secrecy and monopoly, and thus contribute to the well-being of mankind in general.
4. The London Exhibition in 1851.
5. The Calcutta Exhibition in 1885.

LXX. THE STUDY OF SCIENCE.

1. The beauties of nature more fully and more emphatically realised.
2. Beneficial effects on the growth of intellect and of our morals.
3. The services of Science to man.
4. The disadvantages of acquiring only a smattering of Science.

LXXI. EDUCATION.

1. Its meaning in former times and its meaning now.
2. Its scope—the harmonious development of all our faculties.
3. The moral and intellectual benefits of education.
4. The practical advantages of education.

LXXII. THE VALUE OF TIME.

1. Time is money.
2. Time is life.
3. The time allotted to us for work is very short and it should therefore be made the most of.
4. The time of childhood and of youth particularly precious.
5. The moral advantages of a proper employment of time.

LXXIII. DRAWING.

1. Drawing a step towards Technical Education.
2. The usefulness of maps and illustrations.
3. Drawing teaches the habit of close observation.
4. The value of this habit in all pursuits.

LXXIV. VIRTUE IS ITS OWN REWARD.

1. The rewards of success in life.
2. The higher part of man's nature.
3. Peace of mind from a quiet conscience.
4. This peace superior to all other kinds of gratification.

LXXV. VICE BRINGS ITS OWN PUNISHMENT.

1. Self-torment is the penalty of vice.
2. A sense of degradation another result of vice.
3. Vice fills us with a distrust and suspicion of others.
4. The disastrous effects of vice on our moral nature.
5. The fears and anxieties accompanying vice.
6. A vicious man is without the consolations of religion.

LXXVI. KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

1. Knowledge is knowledge of Nature and of man.
2. Success in life cannot be achieved without this knowledge.
3. The advantages of self-knowledge.
4. The advantages of our knowledge of others.
5. The advantages of our knowledge of Nature.
6. Men of knowledge are centres of ideas and opinions.

LXXVII. RESPIRATION.

1. The breath that we take in and the breath that we give out. Their respective effects upon the human system.
2. Experiments and illustrations indicating these effects.
3. A scientific explanation of these effects.
4. Death by fumes of charcoal accounted for.
5. The nature of carbonic acid gas.
6. What improves our lungs and what injures them.

LXXVIII. HEALTH.

1. Bengalis often unmindful of their health. The disastrous consequences of this.
2. Health is a blessing in itself.
3. Neglect of health a sign of imperfect education.
4. The influence of health on the growth of intellect and of moral virtues.

LXXIX. COURAGE.

1. Physical and moral courage contrasted.
2. The contrast illustrated by examples.
3. Courage sometimes natural and sometimes acquired, springing from a sense of duty.
4. Courage essential to success.

LXXX. AMBITION.

1. Its etymological meaning ; its modern sense.
2. Ambition erroneously regarded as a reproach.
3. Ambition an index of power.
4. Ambition contrasted with idle day-dreams.
5. Ambition may be for the lower or the higher aims of life.

LXXXI. THE STORY OF THE RAMAYANA.

1. Ram's marriage.
2. His exile through the intrigues of his step-mother Kaikeyi.
3. Bharat's attempt to bring back Ram.
4. Ram living in the forest, and the abduction of his wife Sita.
5. Ram's alliance with the Monkeys and the conquest of Ceylon.
6. The exile of Sita.
7. The horse-sacrifice, and the reconciliation with Sita.
8. Sita's death.

LXXXII. THE STORY OF THE MAHABHARAT.

1. Pandu dies and his orphans are brought up by his brother Dhritarastra.
2. The jealousy between the Pandus and the Kurus, and its disastrous effects.
3. Yudhistir crowned king, and the Roysuya sacrifice.
4. The game at dice and the exile of the Pandus.
5. Their return and the great war of the Kurus.
6. The ascent of Yudhistir to heaven.

LXXXIII. DESULTORY READING.

1. Etymology and significance of the term "desultory."
2. A desultory reader does not understand what he reads, and so his study is unprofitable.
3. It is much better to go out and take a walk in the open air than to read listlessly merely for the purpose of killing time.
4. Desultory reading produces a habit of inattention, which makes us inaccurate and inexact in all that we do.

LXXXIV. SOURCES OF HAPPINESS.

1. Health, wealth and learning promoters of happiness.
2. Success in life one of the chief sources of happiness.
3. Learning and the study and pursuit of Fine Arts.
4. Domestic happiness.
5. Virtue and religion sources of the purest happiness.

LXXXV. BENGALI LITERATURE.

1. Vidyapati Chandidas and Govindadas. Their matter and their manner.
2. Kirtodas Kahiray, the Boswell of Bengal.
3. Kirtibas and Kasidas, the great translators of the two Indian epics.
4. Mukundaram and Bharat Chandra.
5. Those who have translated from English authors, Aukhoy K. Datta and Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar.
6. Those who have imitated English authors, Michael M. Datta, Bankim Chandra Chatterja and Dinabandhu Mitra.

LXXXVI. INSTINCT.

1. Instinct is innate but very often undistinguishable from the highest form of reason and intelligence.
2. Cases of wonderful intelligence among animals: a turtle making its way towards the shore of a river.
3. Bees erecting combs under very peculiar circumstances.
4. The sagacity of ants and apes.

LXXXVII. THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF BENGAL.

1. The richer classes are merchants, or bankers, or Zemindars.
2. The middle classes are chiefly Government servants, clerks, schoolmasters.
3. The lower classes are personal servants, barbers, blacksmiths.

LXXXVIII. FAMINES.

1. The first indication of a famine is the failure of two successive crops.
2. Famine prices.
3. Formerly famines were not preventable. But now the facilities of commerce have to a large extent made famines impossible.
4. Famine relief operations now in practice.
5. The Government always very actively benevolent in cases of famine.

LXXXIX. DELAYS ARE DANGEROUS.

1. In some cases the injurious consequences of delays can never be repaired.
2. Dilatoriness is a mark of inferior understanding.
3. It is also a sign of lax morals.
4. Death is always at our heels. We must not defer till to-morrow what we can do to-day.

XC. NONE ARE COMPLETELY HAPPY.

1. Whether a man is happy or not is to be ascertained by himself.
2. No one ever considers himself perfectly happy.
3. Material prosperity is in many cases unattainable.
4. As soon as we gain one end, we desire another; so that we never are but always to be blest.
5. Our happiness is very often in the hands of others.
6. A sense of happiness paralyses efforts. Hence God never allows us to be completely happy.

XCI. FAME.

1. Passion for fame universal.
2. Fame a higher type of self-indulgence.
3. The consequences of a desire for fame.
4. Permanent fame never acquired without genuine merit.
5. Work for the work's sake rather than for fame.

XCII. THE BENEFITS OF COMMERCE.

1. The goddess of wealth delights in commerce. Commercial nations the richest on earth.
2. Commerce does not add to the wealth of the world. It only effects an exchange between the goods of one country and those of another.
3. Commerce brings into a country what it wants, and carries out of it what is superfluous.
4. Commerce is not without its evils :
 - (a) It fosters pomp and luxury.
 - (b) It sets up rivalry and antagonism between one nation and another.
5. Our exports still large and our imports small. Hence we get money from other countries through commerce.
6. If we could manufacture, our gains would be increased.

XCIII. CONTENTMENT.

1. A contented man is always happy.
2. The methods of acquiring contentment :
 - (a) Remembering that we have more than we want.
 - (b) Remembering that we might have been more unhappy than we are.
 - (c) Religion.
 - (d) Thoughts on the shortness of life.
3. Contentment must not degenerate into indolence and sloth.

XCIV. CUSTOM.

1. What custom means.
2. The force of custom. It makes most things easy and pleasant.
3. Custom is neither good nor bad in itself. It may be made a help to virtue or to vice.
4. In the beginning every custom had a meaning. But often a custom is retained even when it serves no beneficial purpose.
5. There are some horrible customs, the origin of which is lost in mystery.

XCIV. ZEAL.

1. The mental attitude and the effort which zeal implies or involves.
2. Zeal alone will cause success. Want of zeal will surely lead to failure.
3. The disadvantages of excessive zeal :
 - (a) Zeal puts a heavy strain on our bodily and mental constitution.
 - (b) Zeal is narrow, partial and blind.
 - (c) Zeal often begets cruelty and intolerance.

XCVI. CHARACTER.

1. Character a necessary condition of success.
2. Character alone gives us worth.
3. Character secures real happiness.
4. Character is to a large extent a result of our surroundings.
5. Character is, partially at any rate, of our own making.

XCVII. HEROISM.

1. Its principal element—self-sacrifice.
2. Simplicity another element.
3. Doing the duty that lies nearest to us a third element.
4. Two instances of heroism in common life selected from the novels of *John Halifax* and *Esmond*.
5. Certain times favourable to heroism and certain times not. But heroism is possible in all ages and under all circumstances.

XCVIII. SUPERSTITION.

1. Definition. Its motives the fear of an unknown evil and the expectation of an unknown bliss.
2. Superstitions among the ancients, in England and in India.
3. Some superstitions are harmless, some are absurd, and some are bad.
4. Some bad superstitions in Bengal.
5. The remedy against superstition.

XCIX. CLEANLINESS.

1. It promotes health and gives external and internal purity.
2. Hindus and Mahomedans equally careful about cleanliness of person, but the latter more careful about their dress.
3. Cleanliness gives respectability and is attractive.
4. Dirt often a temporary necessity.

C. FORMATION OF CHARACTER : THE HELPS.

1. Education of the feelings.
2. The setting up of lofty ideals.
3. Practical exercise of virtue.
4. Contemplation of God and his attributes.

MODEL ESSAYS

I. THE ADVANTAGES OF PASSING THE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION.

If a student fails to pass his Entrance examination in this country, he is apt to think that all his prospects are blighted. He is looked upon as a "ne'er-do-weel," and his existence is almost a blot on the community to which he belongs. He is a burden on his father and a sorrow to his mother. He is an object of pity, if not also of scorn and ridicule; and among his friends he passes for an idiot. Despised wherever he goes, he lives like an outcast, dragging from day to day a dreary, cheerless existence.

But this is not all. The higher branches of knowledge are to him a sealed book. He is not allowed to join the college classes. He is thus left to his own resources in his search after knowledge, culture, and self-improvement. This means, in nine cases out of ten, a total discontinuance of all future studies.

This even is not the worst. For when a student fails to pass the Entrance examination, he is disabled from joining a profession to earn his livelihood. The legal, the engineering, and the medical professions all require that candidates should come furnished with the necessary credentials in the shape of an entrance certificate. This may seem to him to be a very great hardship, for he may think that in a civilised society every one ought to have the opportunity of receiving a training in a profession from which he may seek to earn his living. But having once failed to show a power of acquiring knowledge, the opportunity of learning a profession is thereafter denied him.

Ten years ago, a young man might hope to get a clerkship in a Government office or in a private firm without passing the Entrance examination. But now no one has the chance of getting even an apprenticeship in a respectable office without passing the Entrance examination. It will thus be seen that all openings, either for culture or for useful employment, are closed for the luckless individual who fails to win the entrance certificate. He has to content himself with a bazar sircarship, a gomastaship, a ship sircarship or something of that sort.

To crown all, a plucked entrance candidate is considered hardly eligible for marriage. The first question which our women now ask about a would-be bridegroom is—"Kaid ta pash" i.e., How many examinations has he passed? Even the child-wife turns up her nose when she learns that she is to be wedded to one who holds no "pash" of any kind. To have passed the entrance examination is not a high recommendation. It is but the lowest rung of the ladder. But not to have passed the entrance examination is a serious disqualification, not only in the public, but also in the private relations of life.

Nevertheless there are instances of men, even in this country, who have acquired a high renown in literature and science through their own unaided exertion. The late Krista Das Pal who rose to fame and eminence chiefly through the power of his pen was a self-made man; so was Babu Gangadhar Acharya who came worthily to fill the high position of the Principal of a second-grade college; and so is Babu Kali Prasanna Ghose of Dacca, who has enriched Bengali Literature with so many thoughtful philosophical productions. These are, it is true, rather exceptional cases of high talents united to an invincible firmness of purpose. But they are enough to show what is possible. Their is no need that a man's education should close simply by misfortune, or because by his own fault, he is shut out from the college doors.

II. ON A JOURNEY BY BOAT ON AN INDIAN RIVER.

We were going on a pilgrimage to Dakhineswara, to visit there the shrine of the Goddess Kali. We took boat from Ahiritolah, a mile or so up from the Howrah bridge. Our boat was a "Bhowlia," having for her crew a helmsman and two oarsmen. There were in the boat two or three punt-poles, tied into a bundle near the prow, to be used in propelling the boat in shallow water. There was also a tow-rope, heaped up in coils upon the deck. This rope was intended to be fastened to the mast, and the boat was to be dragged along by its means from the shore by the two oarsmen. The "Bhowlia" was a very neat and tidy vessel. The inner apartment on the deck was particularly snug and comfortable. It had ten windows, five on each side; and the window-frames could be raised up, and fastened to hooks attached to the roof. These open windows not only admitted a sufficient quantity of light and air, but commanded a wide prospect of the river, and of the landscapes on its banks. The deck was but little raised above the level of the water, so that whenever the waves rose high, either on account of the flood-tide or by the passage of a steamer hard by, they swept across the upper flat, drenching and damaging the trunks and the bedding piled up thereon. We set sail at about 2 P.M. The

Oarsmen took their seats at the prow, and straining every nerve, pulled hard at the oars. Our light craft cut its way merrily along the smooth reaches of the Ganges. The two oarsmen began now to chant a love-song at the top of their voices, and the splashing of the oars seemed to keep time with the wild strain. The helmsman at the stern was quietly smoking his hooka, and was eyeing us from behind, probably making a note of all that we were saying or doing.

I peeped out of the windows and began to feast my eyes upon the rich and luxuriant vegetation which adorns the banks of the mighty Ganges in the lower part of its delta. Gardens, orchards, and groves met my eyes at every turn. The green leaves, the gay flowers and the golden fruits presented a variety of beauties of an indescribable charm. In the midst of these landscapes I sometimes marked a grand edifice towering high above the luxuriant verdure. Another attractive feature was the bathing ghats or landing-places, with their immense flights of steps from the banks into the stream. Towns and villages passed before my eyes in rapid succession. Troops of women could also be seen ascending and descending the stairs, with brass or earthen water-vessels carried on their hips.

The ebb-tide set in when we were still some miles from our destination. So far it had been very smooth sailing; for we were being carried up stream by the flood-tide. But now we had to make head against the current. The Manghee now girded up his loins, and stood up at his post. He put forth his best energies and began with a mighty effort to assist the oarsmen from the helm. Yet the boat made but little progress; it reeled from side to side unsteadily. Thus it was not until nightfall that we reached the end of our journey.

III. THE DURGA PUJA FESTIVAL.

As the Bengali adage has it, Hindus celebrate thirteen festivals in a twelvemonth. But of all the festivals which gladden the Hindu home, there is none that can bear comparison with the Durga Puja. It is called *THE Puja par excellence*, for it casts into the shade all the other Pujas in this country. The Pujah originated with Ram, who invoked the aid of the Ten-handed goddess on the eve of his conquest of Lanka. Since that memorable occasion, the goddess Durga, attended by all the members of her household, comes down every year from her abode in the Kailas hills, to stay for three days with her worshippers in the plains. The goddess has a most imposing appearance; she has her right foot placed on the back of her faithful lion; her left foot is planted on the right shoulder of *Asur* who, as his name implies, is the impersonation of evil. In her ten hands she carries weapons of ten different kinds, such as the javelin, the bow, the

arrow, the mace, the battle-axe, the sword. The goddess of wealth, painted yellow, probably on account of the yellow colour of gold, stands on her right. On her left stands the goddess of learning painted white, probably because of the purity and holiness of learning. Ganes, the god of success, seated on a mouse, occupies the right extremity of the frame-work, while Kartic, the god of war, seated on a peacock, occupies the left extremity. Siva, the destroyer, sits literally over the head of Durga, his wife, in a posture of deep and devout meditation.

The first or the opening day of the Puja is called the "Saptami" or "the seventh day of the moon." As soon as the day dawns, a procession sets out with flags and banners, with big umbrellas and silver sceptres, with drums and pipes to fetch from the neighbouring river or tank, the *Kakubow* or the bride of Ganes. As soon as the procession returns, the priests repeat certain hymns and chants, which are supposed to have the virtue of investing the clay images with life. Meanwhile, the worshippers have purified themselves with a bath, and have arrayed themselves in new and gorgeous *dhotis* and sheets of cotton, silk, or satin. And now they flock in, each carrying in his arms a basket or a brass plate full of flowers, leaves of *tulsi* and *bael*. The priest reads out a hymn in a sonorous voice and it is repeated by all the assembled worshippers. On this occasion, no restrictions of age or sex are observed. The father and the son, the husband and the wife, the brother and the sister, the daughter and son-in-law all sit or stand in a ring round the goddess, uttering in loud chorus the prayers and thanksgivings as recited by the priests. The women, of course, speak in a low voice from within the veil.

Soon after this, an important ceremony is performed in the court-yard of the temple. A block is erected for immolating a goat. The goat is dipped in the river and then brought back and fastened to the block. The priest now comes down and worships the goat, the block, the sword, and the blocksmith who is to kill the goat. Then the mouth of the goat is gagged with a yellow rope, and it is pushed to the block. Its two front legs are drawn over its body by a person who holds them in one hand, and its hinder legs in the other hand, while its mouth is held off by another person. In the midst of these tortures, the goat is sacrificed with one stroke of the sword, whilst loud shouts arise of—"Victory to the mother Durga," "Accept your sacrifice, mother Durga." As soon as the head is severed, the worshippers begin to sing and dance in excess of joy, for the killing of the goat is the symbol that our sins have been atoned for. The head of the slaughtered victim is then carried to the goddess, and a burning wick is placed thereon. The goddess smells or breathes this burnt offering in the midst of loud beatings of drums and playing on pipes. This closes the

important ceremony of the day. In the evening, the priest performs the vespers or the *Arati*. A lighted lamp with five wicks is turned, round and round, while bells are rung and conches are blown, drums beaten and pipes sounded. The second and the third day are repetitions of the first, with the exception that two goats are killed on the second day, and that three or more are slaughtered on the third. In rich families a buffalo is immolated on the third day.

These three days pass away in constant gaieties and rejoicings. From hour to hour there is an incessant round of mirth and jollity. Various music parties, such as *Jatras*, *Ramayans*, *Sivayans*, *Kabis*, *Kirtans*, *Panchalis*, and the like, vie with each other in catering for the enjoyment of the public. Feasts and banquets become the order of the day. Sweets and delicacies of all kinds are distributed with a liberal and unstinted hand. The women and the children are attired in their gayest apparel, and presents of clothes and ornaments have to be made to near relations. In one word, wherever one goes, one meets with nothing but luxury and extravagance, gaieties and festivities, rejoicings and merry-makings.

On the fourth day, the goddess is immersed in water. Crowds of men and women may be seen on this day lining the banks of the river, and anxiously watching the various rites performed at this concluding ceremony. On returning home the *Bijaya* has to be performed, i.e., blessings are given and taken with suitable greetings. The juniors, after embracing their seniors, touch their feet; while the latter bless them with outstretched hands. All differences and disputes are forgiven and forgotten on this auspicious day, and peace and goodwill reign supreme everywhere. Then the worshippers are expected to drink *siddhi*, a preparation of Bhang, for it is the favourite drink of Shiva, the husband of the goddess Durga. With this the Durga Puja closes.

IV. AN INDIAN JUNGLE.

An Indian Jungle has all the characteristics of a tropical forest. The trees attain the largest possible dimensions. They rise to such an enormous height that their actual tops are almost invisible from their base, looking like an undistinguishable mass of green. Their girth also is very great and they stand, at short intervals, like lofty towers on a ground overgrown with a tangled mass of weeds. Sometimes creepers are seen climbing upon the trees, almost covering them up with their gay foliage. Most of the trees that grow in an Indian forest are unrecognisable except by students of botany. But there are some forests which are almost exclusively made up of teak trees. These trees have a most imposing and even picturesque appearance. They seem to

touch the sky with their topmost branches, and their bulk fills us with a sense of majestic awe and grandeur. Their leaves also are very large, befitting as it were the lofty size of the trees on which they grow. Next in importance is the banyan tree, with its fibrous branches descending like so many trunks of elephants. The peepul is also a magnificent growth. It has a wild beauty of its own, contrasting with the lofty and sublime grandeur of the teak and the banyan. The mango, the jack, the palm, the date, and the cotton trees also lend their varied charms to the beauty of the Indian forest.

The forest is inhabited by many wild animals. Among these, the most remarkable are, of course, the tiger and the elephant. There are also herds of wild antelopes, so beautiful with their large swimming eyes and elegantly branching horns. Nothing can be grander or more awful than to see a troop of elephants, brushing past you in a forest, trampling under foot the briars, the bushes and the underwood, and breaking lofty branches with a twist of their mighty trunks; nothing again is more terrible than to see a ferocious tiger crouching beneath a thicket and springing upon its prey from under the cover; what again, can be more beautiful than to see a flock of wild peacocks flitting past you, or perching on lofty branches, with their gorgeous tails spread out in full before your admiring eyes? In some parts of the forest there reigns absolute silence; in others there is a chorus of warbling melody sent forth from the throats of a large variety of the feathered species. And everywhere there is a sombre gloom even amidst the midday glare of the tropic sun.

In such a wild and impressive scene man is brought into the near presence of his Maker. All his conceit vanishes; he becomes conscious of his own littleness; he forgets his vaunted civilisation and he falls prostrate at the feet of that God, whose greatness and omnipotence seem to be but faintly shadowed in the mighty scene before him.

These forests are sometimes visited by men for cutting wood, for hunting for birds and honey-combs, or for bagging game; and strange stories of adventure are told by those who seek their sport or their livelihood in these haunts of death. In the *Sunderbunds*, for instance, so goes the tale, a woodman was once bathing in a stream flowing through a dense jungle, when a tiger and an alligator made for him simultaneously from opposite directions. As his enemy upon the bank crouched to spring, the woodman jumped aside, and the tiger fell within the jaws of the alligator. The woodman then lost no time in saving himself by flight, little caring what became of the strange encounter of which he had been the unwilling cause.

Of the great serpents such as the python, whose home is the jungle, weird stories are also told how they can seize even a

man and throw their irresistible coils around him, crushing out his life and crumbling his very bones, after which they will slowly swallow whole his lifeless body.

V. A RIVER.

A river, as is well known, serves many important and useful purposes. Being naturally at a lower level than the towns or villages through which it flows, it will drain off the surplus waters of these places, either by natural water-courses or by subsoil channels. The benefits of this sort of natural drainage cannot be over-estimated. It will keep the places dry and thus contribute materially to the health of their inhabitants. Then again, a river, if properly preserved from pollution, gives us an inexhaustible supply of pure drinking water, the want of which has been ascertained to be one of the principal causes of cholera. Thirdly, a river helps irrigation, and thus saves us from drought and famine. Fourthly, a river cools and freshens the breeze, and thereby gives it a bracing, invigorating effect upon the plants and the animals which fall in its way. Lastly, a river is the highway of commerce, and therefore of civilisation. Many of those states and towns that have achieved any great prosperity in ancient or modern times will be found to have depended for their good fortune upon navigable rivers in their vicinity.

But utility is not the only recommendation of a river. Its chief glory is its beauty. In spring and in summer when it falls down to its lowest ebb, and when its clear and transparent waters reflect the sky, it does one's heart good to watch its gentle ripples, and to listen to its soft murmurs. It is now that the flowering trees on the banks of the rivers are seen in all their grandeur; and as we sit on a riverside in the afternoon, watching its gentle mild flow, or it may be the crimson glow of the sunset dancing on its purple wavelets, we are carried into the region of romance and poetry, and the whole scene breathes into us a sober, tranquil joy, if not also a spirit of deep and silent devotion. During the rains, however, a river presents an entirely different aspect. Then its waters become turbid and its waves begin to flow on with a mighty roll, and it inspires in us a solemn and sublime awe.

It must, however, be admitted that a river is not always an unimixed blessing. When it overflows its banks and sweeps away everything in its path, it becomes a means of ruin and destruction. It uproots trees, overturns houses, and changes a smiling plain into a dreary waste. The Padma in Eastern and Northern Bengal is in this way a terror and a plague. Hundreds and thousands of men are rendered homeless by its ravages year after year. The river Kirtinasha is so called from the fact

that it washed away every vestige of the palatial residence of Raja Rajbullava in the course of a few months. A river in fact is a mighty force of nature following blindly its own laws and principles, and distributing its favours and disfavours with perfect unconcern for men's smiles and tears.

VI. BODILY EXERCISE.

✓ It is a common-place observation that health, if not the greatest, is one of the greatest blessings of life. Without health all the pleasures of life fail to interest us. With it, poverty itself will lose its sting. But this is not all. A sound body helps to make a sound mind and a firm purity of character. To preserve health is therefore an imperative duty which it would be a sin to neglect.

✓ It is bodily exercise alone that can keep us in vigour of health. No part of the human system, be it body, mind, or soul, can be kept in a state of efficiency without exercise. Memory, imagination, and understanding require exercise for development; without adequate exercise they would become dull, feeble and rusty. In the same way the body loses all vigour and activity, and becomes but a burdensome prison to the soul, unless we go through a regular course of physical exercise day by day.

Physical exercise may take different forms. Walking is probably the easiest, if not also the pleasantest form. But it should always, if possible, be walking with some object of its own besides that of the mere exercise: it should not be a mere "constitutional." Dickens, the great novelist, used to walk sixteen miles a day. This not only improved his health, but gave his mind a freshness and liveliness extremely favourable to the growth and development of his inventive genius. He has himself told us that most of his plots, if not also most of his sentiments and expressions, were evolved in the course of his daily walks. Riding is also a very delightful exercise. Addison regards it as a great promoter of health and recommends it to men and women alike. Indian clubs are of great service for gymnastic purposes. This exercise consists in brandishing two wooden clubs one in each hand. The clubs are turned round and round over head in elegant and varied curves, and this expands the chest, strengthens the muscles and quickens the circulation of the blood. The *Danda* is another form of exercise very much in vogue in India. The athletes are called *Dandagirs*, i.e., experts in the exercise of *Danda*. It consists in a man's lying with his face towards the ground, the whole weight of his body resting upon the palms of his hands and the toes of his feet. While in this position, the man turns and twists his body in various ways, now to the right and now to the left, now down, now up. This puts a general strain on the

muscles, and causes every limb and member of the body to partake equally of the benefit of the exercise.

There are, however, certain other methods of physical exercise which combine pleasure with profit. Among these might be mentioned wrestling, fencing, and the various out-door games, such as cricket, lawn-tennis, badminton, *dundaguli*, *hodoogoodoo* and the like. In these we are generally in the company of our friends, which is in itself a source of animation and pleasure. They are, moreover, productive of fun, jollity, and good companionship such as must have a beneficial effect upon our nerves and upon the bodily system as a whole. Lastly, there is the desire to win, the feeling of rivalry adding fresh zeal and relish to the whole affair. It is not enough for a game to have a beneficial side, it must also have attractiveness.

VII. THE RAINY SEASON.

The principal seasons of India are summer, the rains, and winter. The rainy season lasts in from about the middle of June to the close of October. During this period the wind usually blows from the south. As in other tropical countries, the rainfall in India, during the four or five months of the wet season, is something enormous, being almost twice as great as that of England during the whole year. Some twenty or thirty years ago, the rains were the dullest part of the year. The very little of business, that used to be transacted in those days, in the country, came to a stand-still. The Pundits closed their *tolls* (the indigenous schools); the rivers being swollen beyond all proportions, traffic was out of the question, all out-door work had to be discontinued: the roads became impassable; and life became a dull and monotonous round of smoking and gossip. The gradual improvement of means of communication—the spread of railways and of feeder roads to them, the establishment of lines of river-steamers, of a draught so light as to allow them to penetrate into the interior of the country up even shallow steamers, and the laying out in almost every district of the Province of well-raised roads paid for by contributions levied under the Road Cess Act, all these improvements have joined in doing away with the old state of things. Now-a-days the rainy season, except in the most backward districts, is as full of work as those that go before or after it.

The most striking feature of this season is, of course, the thunder-storm. Vast masses of clouds, charged with rain, rise from the Indian Ocean, advancing further and further towards the north. The sky assumes a troubled and frowning look, and after a few days of uncertain weather, divided between sunshine and gloom, the thunder-storm makes its appearance. It is generally preceded by a violent blast of wind darkening

the whole atmosphere with grains of dust and sand. As soon as the winds subside, torrents of rain fall in a heavy downpour. All the while flashes of lightning are seen almost without intermission, and frequent peals of thunder burst on the ear with a violent crash. The rain continues to descend in torrents for hours together, and the whole country begins to look like a pool of water. After a thunder-storm the weather becomes fairer for a while, and then a most interesting spectacle meets our eyes. The husbandman, with his scanty rag round his loins, proceeds merrily towards his fields with his ploughs and oxen. The fertile soil is readily rendered fit for the seeds, which are then actively sown. Within a short time the fields are covered with vegetation, and the whole tract is, as if by a charm, turned into a rich and smiling plain.

VIII. THE HOT SEASON.

Excepting the four short months of winter, from October to February, summer prevails in India throughout the year. Heat becomes oppressive during the five months from March to July, the temperature rising to 100° in the shade. As the day dawns and the sun appears a few points above the horizon, his rays become fiery and fierce almost from the beginning. As the sun mounts higher and higher, the glare across the sky and upon the earth becomes more and more intense and insufferable.

At midday, when the sun reaches the zenith, the whole world seems to glow as though set on fire, and everybody feels a prickling fever-heat burning through every pore of the skin. Life becomes mere endurance; all activity is paralysed; and a languor or lassitude pervades the whole system. The tongue, the throat, and palate, are literally parched up, and we are seized with an almost unquenchable thirst. We consume water by gallons, the body is constantly rubbed over with a wet towel or cloth; but nothing seems to be capable of affording the desired relief.

Sometimes, there is not a breath of wind stirring, and it becomes almost a difficulty to breathe in the glowing and stifling atmosphere. Sometimes a soft, gentle breeze begins to blow in the evening, and it comes upon us as a breath of heaven. Our poets are naturally very loud in their praise of this welcome breeze, which they call *Malayanil*, and to which they attribute the virtue of inspiring love and tenderness. Within a few hours this breeze falls, and there is a repetition of the stifling atmosphere of the day-time. Men now come out into the open air, where they sit upon the grass and beguile the hours with music, gossip, and the *chillum*. It begins to get cooler in the small hours of the morning, and then men tumble into their simple beds and enjoy a few hours' sound and refreshing slumber.

To most of us, summer is a very healthy season. A dry soil and a bright clear atmosphere have always been great promoters of health, and to those who have been injured to heat from their birth, summer proves more congenial than winter. Fevers become more scarce, and the malaria-stricken Natives of the country enjoy a brief respite. Summer is, however, the period for outbreaks of cholera and small-pox. Unlike malarial fever these two pests are perfectly preventable, all that is required being a temperate diet and early vaccination.

Summer has another advantage over other seasons. It is now that fruits mature and ripen through the heat of the sun. Mangoes, jacks, guavas, yams, etc., abound in this season, and these are the fruits which, in delicious flavour, have hardly any superiors or rivals in India, or indeed in the world.

Summer, however, is very trying to Europeans. In describing the effects of the Indian climate upon Europeans, Kipling mentions the following calamities: in May "a slight dose of fever:" in June, "dysentery:" in July, "cholera," "sun-stroke," and "epilepsy." Some allowance ought to be made here for poetic exaggeration. But there is no denying the fact that Europeans feel the distress of heat much more intensely than Natives do. The punkha, ice, and the thermautidote have to some extent mitigated the violence and the fierceness of the season. But nature is really too strong for man, and to the European our Indian summer is still a torment and a plague.

IX. LEARNING TO SWIM.

Daily ablutions in rivers or tanks are enjoined, as a religious duty, upon Hindus and Mahomedans alike. To learn to swim is therefore a matter of imperative and supreme necessity in India. For accidents will surely happen, in spite of all the precautions that we may take; and nothing is more likely than that we should wade beyond our depth while bathing. This almost certainly means death to a person ignorant of the art of swimming. Now nothing could be more unfortunate, we may say more disgraceful, than that one should die under such simple and ordinary circumstances. Moreover it would be a shame not to be able to rescue even little boys or girls from a watery grave, when they struggle for life in our very presence. Then again, we are very often called upon to perform journeys by water; if we learn to swim, we may, to some extent, secure ourselves against the chances of being drowned. Lastly, swimming is very beneficial as a form of physical exercise, consisting, as it does, in a healthful and vigorous employment of the muscles of the limbs and body.

It is very easy to learn swimming. All that we have to do is merely to keep our body afloat on water, and then to advance

slowly along by a gentle motion of the arms and the legs. For a beginner, the best course, probably, is to lean the whole weight of his body upon an empty pitcher turned upside down and to ply his legs alternately. Sometimes a light plank may serve his turn, most efficaciously. It takes about a fortnight to make a fairly good swimmer. Swimming requires no very great skill or aptitude, and involves no diligent application nor any violent exertion. And once learnt it is never forgotten. It is, therefore, plain that every one should acquire this art of swimming in boyhood.

Byron took great pride in his skill as a swimmer. He had read of Leander swimming across the Hellespont in search of Hero, his sweetheart. He was fired with the ambition to rival Leander in his mad exploit. And he too swam across the Hellespont in an hour and a half. This, however, is an instance of misguided zeal, for no one ought to risk his life for the accomplishment of such a paltry object. There are, numberless instances of heroism displayed by swimmers in saving the lives of shipwrecked men in stormy seas. The best swimmer in modern times, was probably Captain Webb, who swam from Calais to Dover, a distance of over twenty miles, in about twenty hours. Skill in swimming must have been considered a great recommendation in ancient Rome. In Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, Cassius boasts of his skill and pluck as a swimmer. He mentions with pride the circumstance that on a gusty day, while the Tiber was chafing with her shores, he bore the palm in a swimming contest with Cæsar.

X. THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.

This is one of the brightest achievements of science ; for by it man has harnessed for his use one of the subtlest and most powerful forces of nature. The lightning of heaven, once supposed to be the monopoly of Indra, has now been pressed into our service and has been made to carry our messages over vast distances with incredible rapidity. The whole world has been drawn together in a close bond of sympathy and co-operation. As we open our newspapers in the morning, we stand face to face with the whole world, and immediately we become aware of all that has been doing in this wide world of ours during the previous day. Formerly, to "survey mankind from China to Peru" was only an hyperbole, a poetic vision. But now this "extensive view" is a very easy and ordinary affair. Science has thus worked miracles. For as we cast a rapid, cursory glance over the pages of a newspaper, we take in the whole situation of the world's affairs. In a moment we are put in possession of the thoughts that have been thought, the words that have been spoken, and the actions that have been done upon this mighty globe.

Three things are necessary for a telegraphic communication. First of all, there must be a battery to generate a current of electricity. Secondly, there must be a metallic wire to transmit the current from station to station. And lastly, when the current reaches the receiving station, it must set in motion either a needle or an index, or cause certain dots and dashes to be made on a piece of paper. Certain conventional meanings are assigned to the oscillations of the needle or the index, and to the dots and the dashes. In certain cases the index is made to point to the letters of the alphabet. By these means the telegraph is made to speak as if with a distinct articulate voice.

The uses of the electric telegraph are manifest. It is a great help to us in our private and domestic relations. By its means, the father can put himself in daily or hourly communication with the distant son. Husband and wife, brother and sister, are by it enabled to greet each other from a vast distance. In cases of emergency, it alone can bring together the family group, even when they are separated from each other by hundreds of miles. In trade and commerce its services are invaluable. By its means we can at once ascertain whether a trade is dull or brisk, and immense gains may be made by buying in a cheap market and selling in a dear one. When a storm or cyclone is in the air, it is the electric telegraph which warns us of its approach, thus becoming the instrument of saving numerous lives and enormous property.

In war and in politics the telegraph renders us incalculable services. It is the telegraphic wire which keeps us Indians informed as to how our future is being shaped by our rulers at the other end of the globe. And when the enemy make their first advance against our frontier, it is the telegraph which is expected to sound the first note of alarm. It will be superfluous to mention more particulars. For the uses and advantages of this instrument of progress are patent to all.

XI. SNAKES.

Snakes have a long and flexible form. Usually they creep along with a winding motion, but they make a sudden dart when about to seize their prey or inflict a deadly wound in anger, or vengeance, or self-defence. They are not usually aggressive and will get out of the way if they can. But on some occasions, when their fear or anger is roused, they will turn upon men with a violent jerk, and, standing erect on their coils, will dart forward their heads with a terrible force. They have a thin, long, forked tongue. Their teeth are crooked and hollow, and by a peculiar contrivance are capable of being erected or depressed at pleasure. The poison-fangs are perforated teeth, loose at the root, and there is a small canal leading from the fangs to certain

glands behind, known as poison-bags. When a serpent bites, it fixes its teeth upon the flesh; the closing of the jaw presses the tooth down upon the poison-bag, and the fluid is forced through the hollow of the tooth until it is deposited in the incisions made by the tooth. One drop of poison is often enough to kill a strong and healthy man in the course of a few minutes. The poison courses along through the veins with incredible rapidity and the whole system becomes affected in the twinkling of an eye. The unhappy victim turns blue, or rather black, in the face, foams at the mouth, and soon becomes a stiff and swollen corpse. Seventeen thousand deaths occur annually in India from snake-bite alone.

There are altogether some 218 varieties of snakes in India, but of these 33 only are poisonous. Happily, also a poisonous snake does not always strike with the poison-fangs. If it were not for these two facts deaths from snake-bite would be much more numerous in India than they now are. For the bite of some snakes there is no cure. The various nostrums proposed for this purpose have, on investigation, been found to be worthless. The *sar-mora* or snake-stone was found by Dr Fayer to be useless. The only effective remedy is to bind a ligature above the part bitten and to burn the wound with caustic or with some strong acids. It is a curious fact that the poison may be swallowed by a man without any fatal result; but if it mixes with the blood, as in the case of a bite, it kills almost instantaneously.

Snakes are carnivorous and do not feed on dust as some people believe. They do not chew their food but swallow it whole. They hold their prey with their teeth which turn backwards. The lower jaw is not, as is the case with us, fixed to the upper one, and hence their mouths and throats are capable of enormous distension. It is very curious to observe how a serpent with an apparently tiny mouth, swallows whole a big toad or frog. Boas or pythons, which are sometimes from 30 to 40 feet long, are capable of swallowing good-sized animals, such as hares, goats, deer and so on. It is said that the most venomous snakes in this country, the cobra and the gokhura (or gomai) are all females, the males being all of the species known as the *Dhennia*, a slang term for gallants. Serpents are extremely prolific, laying several hundreds of eggs at a time. They coil around their eggs while hatching, and fortunately for us devour the largest number of them themselves.

Naturally enough, cunning, malice, and ferocity have always been regarded as the essential characteristics of snakes. Satan is said to have hidden himself in the disguise of a serpent, when he deceived the mother of mankind. In this country, serpents are described as extremely malicious. Chanakya, whose moral aphorisms are so deservedly popular says, "Serpents are malicious

and so are the envious. But the envious surpass the serpents in malice and cruelty. For there are ways of training serpents, with incantations, with herbs and roots; but the envious are ever incorrigible." Serpents have also been regarded as ferocious and revengeful. These notions have gained credence, partly because there is something terrible and sinister in the looks of serpents. They have no eyelids and hence their eyes always appear to be on the watch. Their forked tongue, which they dart out so often, has also a very ugly look about it. Moreover, their silent movements and their mysterious appearance and disappearance are particularly likely to give us an idea that they are something supernatural. Lastly, we can not help feeling a strong aversion to this animal in as much as it is endowed with such sure and swift powers of destruction.

Serpents have played an important part in the history of ancient myths and religions of the world. Tree and serpent worship was the oldest form of religion in almost every country. In India Shiva, the destroyer, has many hissing snakes coiling around his arms, his wrists, his waist, his neck, his hair; and Krishna, like Christ, is fabled to have bruised the head of the serpent in one of his labours as the *Kaligadaman*. In one word, serpents have often been represented as embodiments of all that is evil, unholy or loathesome, a testimony to the horror and dread we entertain of this dreadful reptile. On the other hand, serpents have often been considered as symbols of health, wealth, and wisdom. Among the Hindus certain days are set apart for the worship of *Mansa*, the queen of serpents. The *Shesha*, or infinity of space, is painted as a serpent in whose coils lies Vishnu, the preserver, with *Lakhmi* his bride sitting at his feet. The earth itself is supposed to rest on one of the hoods of a huge snake. Snakes are supposed to have their residence in the *Patal* or the nether regions. According to the interpretation of the Hindu sages, these myths and legends are merely allegories intended to illustrate some subtle mysteries of Nature and of God.

XII. THE SNAKE-CHARMER.

The old order of things is swiftly passing away from our midst, but the snake-charmer has not changed with the change of the times. In his dress, his habits and manners, and his ways of life, he is exactly what he was described to be in the old-world literature of ancient India. We see him to-day, as our ancestors saw him in the days of *Chanakya* and *Chandrajupta*, parading his treasures and displaying his skill wherever he goes. He gets his living, as he used to do in the old times, by playing with the snakes which he carries in baskets hidden in the loose folds of his saffron knapsack thrown loosely astride his shoulders. He carries on his head a huge turban, wears brass-rings in the lobes

of his ears, and puts on silver or brass bangles on his wrists and arms. As he stalks majestically along the streets, he plays a wild strain of music on his primitive flute, which is very much like a Scotch bagpipe. All his movements are characterised by an air of conscious importance. He has much faith in himself, and he misses no opportunity of impressing upon his audience, a sense of his own consequence. He is extremely voluble, and is generally gifted with a most impressive eloquence. He addresses his audience somewhat after this fashion :—"Look here, Babus," he says, "this is not a question of money. This is not a question of hundreds, thousands or even of lakhs. This is a question of learning, of wisdom, of skill, and of aptitude." To crown all this, he can compose verses and rhymes quite *impromptu*. In short, we cannot but be very favourably impressed with his imposing and attractive bearing.

When called upon to show his skill, he quietly lays down his knapsack on the ground and takes out of it two or three snake-baskets. He then cautiously opens the lid of a basket and we see therein four or five huge snakes lying huddled together in a heap. They evidently do not wish to come out, and it is only after a certain amount of pinching, poking, and pushing that a huge one is at last dragged out of the basket. The snake-charmer now leans upon one knee and shakes the creature backwards and forwards. All this while, the music never ceases, and somehow or other the snake seems to be enraptured with it. It raises itself up upon its coils and with a graceful bend of its neck begins to oscillate from side to side, as if keeping time to the music. But as this is not exciting enough for the beholders, the snake-charmer presses and pinches the tail of the snake, until with a hissing sound it makes a dart at the bare knee of its owner. It is a mistake to suppose the snakes which are thus played with are all harmless, for there have been instances of men and women who have died after being accidentally bitten by these snakes. But the snake-charmer seems to be a privileged being ; he is bitten all over, sometimes in play indeed, but sometimes in right earnest, but he is seldom the worse for this. He is very clever and handles his snakes with much impunity. It is only on rare occasions that he gets too confident, and omits to take the necessary precautions, and is bitten fatally.

Some of the tricks exhibited by the snake-charmer are really marvellous. For example, one of the spectators chosen at random is asked to step forward and the snake-charmer uttering some incantations, puts a handful of earth or dust within his closed palms. He then goes round and round playing upon his flute. After a short interval, to the amazement of everyone, he drags out a huge snake from within the palms of the man. There must be some jugglery ; but it is very clever and displays a wonderful sleight of hand. The catching of snakes is a very daring and

dangerous affair. The snake-charmer smells at different burrows and at once discovers which are inhabited. Having scattered some scents on the floor he begins to play upon his flute, taking care to keep out of sight. Very soon the snake comes forth. The snake-charmer watches his opportunity; he seizes the reptile by the tail and rapidly slipping his hand up to its neck holds it firm. He then takes a pair of pliers and disarms the reptile of its poisonous fangs. Thus the formidable cobra, whose touch is death, is changed from a dreaded enemy into an innocent instrument of display, and is taught to obey the commands of its dexterous captor.

The snake-charmer boasts that he possesses infallible remedies for snake-bite. He even pretends that he can make the poison flow out from the wound in the shape of an inky fluid. Very often the snake is not poisonous; sometimes the poisonous snake does not strike with the poison-fangs; and in these cases the cure, which is naturally effected, is attributed to charms and nostrums; the snake-charmer thus gets the credit which is not his due. But a case of real snake-bite is often incurable. The poison mixes with the blood in no time, and when this has once happened no skill, no charms, no nostrums are found to be of any avail.

XIII. THE COW.

To a Hindu, the cow is a divinity. She is revered and worshipped as an incarnation of Bhagavati, the consort of Shiva, the Destroyer. According to another account, she is the embodiment of the whole universe, an epitome or microcosm of the whole circle of existence; the different parts of her body are identified with the different worlds presided over by different gods or goddesses. The Sanskrit for cow is *Gô*, which means *this world*. In a Hindu household the cow is daily worshipped, and she is tended with the utmost care and devotion. In performing penances, one has to eat the leavings of a cow's food, for it is believed that no internal purity is achieved without this. Cow-dung is supposed to have the virtue of conferring external as well as internal purity.

Foreigners, and those who are of their way of thinking, look upon all this as an instance of absurd and ignorant superstition. They hold that it is the usefulness of the cow that has invested her with these divine attributes. There cannot be a doubt that the cow is to us an extremely useful animal. The cow's milk is very nourishing as an article of food. The various preparations of this milk, viz. curd, cheese, butter, ghee, etc., are as delicious to the taste as they are conducive to health. Some preparations of milk, such as the *chana* and the *khima*, must enter as a principal element into the sweetmeats and the comfits so largely consumed by our countrymen. Then, again, we are

materially helped by cow-dung. It is formed into cakes, which, when dried, serve the purpose of fuel. It is largely used for manuring purposes. It is also considered as a great disinfectant, and the first duty of a Hindu matron in the morning is to dilute cow-dung in water and to sprinkle it all over the house. Every child knows that the cow is eminently useful to us in these and many other ways. But yet it will be a mistake to hold that the veneration for the cow is to be solely attributed to its usefulness. In the N. W. provinces, the she-buffalo is as useful as the cow; and yet a buffalo is never an object of worship anywhere.

But however this may be, it is a matter of great regret that cows, as a species, are degenerating day by day all over India. Our cows do not now reach the height or the bulk they did some years ago. They give us less milk, and the milk is not so pure or delicious as it used to be. Those who have studied the question are of opinion that this change for the worse is due to the following causes :—(1) Pasture lands are being enclosed and brought under cultivation; (2) Fodder is becoming more and more scarce, and therefore more expensive; (3) The Brahmini bulls, which were intended to improve the breed of cattle in this country, are being pressed into municipal service. Whatever be the causes, the degeneration of the cow is a national evil, and everyone ought to do his best to have it remedied.

Of all animals cows are probably the most harmless. But yet they have been the occasion of kindling bitter animosity between Hindus and Mahomedans. This, however, is a passing evil. And it is to be hoped that tact and mutual forbearance will once more restore the amity which had just been springing up between the two most important sections of our community. India has many difficulties to contend with; internal discord will only complete and hasten her ruin. All well-wishers of India should bear this in mind and should preach toleration, forbearance, and forgiveness.

XIV. THE COLD WEATHER HOLIDAYS.

These holidays have few distinctive features of their own. Life in Bengal is so monotonous and so uneventful that one season passes away much as another. All holidays are welcome to students, for they give ample opportunities for talk and for loitering about. The only advantage which cold weather holidays possess over other holidays is that they allow us to take part in out-door games. But there are many to whom an out-door game is a nuisance rather than otherwise. Our description of cold weather holidays will, with some qualifications, be found quite applicable to holidays in other seasons.

The cold weather holidays have of late been very much

curtailed by the Calcutta University authorities. Formerly these holidays used to extend over two or three months. And beginning, as they did, at the close of all the University examinations, they allowed us free scope to indulge in all kinds of sports and amusements. We then used to get up at about 7 in the morning, and after an hour's loitering here and there we used to meet at the village *atchala* where the village postmaster had his quarters. Taking off our shirts, when we had any, we sat down upon the dirty floor of the *atchala* terrace, basking in the genial sunshine. It was here that we discussed village politics under the presidency of Mahesh Dada who was our guide, philosopher, and friend in all matters. We were all bent upon reforming our benighted village. We had already founded a night-school and a girls' school; we had also started a public library and a reading-room. We were now laying our heads together to establish a charitable dispensary. It was at the *atchala* that we formed our plans and organised our efforts.

It was nearly midday when we went out in a body to bathe in the adjoining river. It was here that we gave full play to our love of mischief. We chased each other up and down the stream, and the stronger ducked the weaker under the water. We also threw mud and sand at each other, and played many other pranks. We then returned home and had our midday meal. After resting for a little while, we went out into the open field where we held our games. We divided ourselves into several groups, each group being engaged in a game of its own. Some played at cricket, which we called *batambal*, a corruption of bat and ball. Some tried their skill at *Danduguli* while others practised *Hadugudu*. In the evening we all went home tired out.

As night set in, we once more went to our rendezvous at the village post office. Here we found our elders engaged in deep and serious conversation. Mahesh Dada was a great talker, and he naturally posed as the oracle of the assembly. He was often pitted against Ganes Kaka, a senior scholar, who spoke with a scholarly finish and elegance. They discussed politics, contrasting the arbitrary oppressions of our Mahomedan rulers with the mild and benevolent despotism of the English. Sometimes religious topics were introduced, and Mahesh Dada shocked and scandalized the gathering by openly supporting atheism. Ganes Kaka was a Deist, and his arguments in support of his belief in a personal God seemed to us to be quite convincing. The discussions were carried on in English, and were of great service to us. For then we caught up phrases and idioms which we have remembered ever since, and which have often stood us in good stead.

The Calcutta Dak used to reach our village at about 10 P.M. The arrival of this dak was the signal for the breaking up of

the company. The postmaster had to be very busy now, and he would allow no interruptions at this important hour. We had therefore to disperse. On our way back home we did obeisance to the family gods. We then partook of our evening meal and slipped off to our beds. We slept soundly till morning, when we got up and went through the same sports and amusements as had engaged us the day before.

XV. THE DESCRIPTION OF "AN OUT-DOOR GAME."

The out-door game which I shall describe is known as *Hadududu* or *Hadugudu*. A smooth, even ground about 20 cubits in length and 10 in breadth is chosen for the play-ground. A line is drawn, dividing it into two equal parts, called *kotes*, a word probably from the English *courts*; the line is called the *loi* or the landmark. The players divide themselves into two parties, each party occupying a *kote* on each side of the landmark. A good deal of judgment and discretion has to be exercised when the players range themselves on the two sides. Age, stature, and strength have to be carefully considered before one player is allowed to be pitted against another. The strength of the two parties being equalised, after, it must be admitted, a good deal of wrangling, the play begins. The two parties then retire to the two extremities of the play-ground. There they draw themselves up in the form of a crescent or *sémi-circle*. The two horns of this crescent are considered to be posts of honour, and they fall naturally to the tallest, the strongest, and the pluckiest of the players. It is they who have to bear the brunt of the attack, to keep the rest in order, to prevent the line from breaking, and to seize and capture the players on the other side. The indifferent players are massed in the centre and are under the protection of those who occupy the wings.

The game begins by one of the players stepping forward and walking with an air of ease and dignity till he reaches the landmark. Once there, he passes awhile as if mustering all his latent strength. He then tightens the folds of his loose *dhoti* or waist-cloth, and with a sudden bound plunges into the line of the enemy. With his hands outstretched and the upper half of his body bent forward, he keeps running from side to side holding his breath and muttering all the while *Hadududu*. His adversaries have not been idle all this time. They firmly hold their ground, and their endeavour is to hem him in. As soon as they have found a suitable opportunity, they catch hold of his wrist or ankle and try to retain him on their side of the field till he is out of breath. If they succeed, then the bold intruder "dies." He stands aside and does not join the game till some one of his adversaries "dies" in the same way to give him life. If, however, the player manages to escape, retaining his breath till he reaches the land-

mark, then all those of his adversaries that had touched him die. Let us suppose, however, that he dies ; for when it is one against so many, the chances are more in favour of death than survival. It now becomes the turn of the other side to send forth one of their players into the ranks of the enemy to conquer or to die. Sometimes the player neither slays nor is slain ; but he comes back unharmed himself and inflicts no loss on the enemy. Then the other side sends forth one of their men in the same way as before. The players thus go on invading each other's court alternately. The contest of life and death goes on in this army till all the members of one party lie dead ; and then this party is declared to have lost.

This is a most interesting game, and it requires a good deal of tact, pluck, and nerve, to achieve success in it. Like most other Indian games, it enjoys one supreme advantage : it does not cost anybody a pice. The English games, which are gradually supplanting the national games of India, are equally interesting ; but they are most of them costly, and are so far unsuited to this country.

XVI. THE SCHOOL AT WHICH I STUDY, AND THE WAY IN WHICH I SPENT MY LONG VACATION.

I am a student of Lakhmipore School in the——District. It is an aided institution, and nearly 300 pupils receive their education in it. Besides the fees and the fines collected from the pupils themselves, the school has two other sources of income : the Government grant of Rs. 60 per month, and the subscriptions and donations realised from the residents of the place. There are more than 200 names on the subscription list, but there are hardly 20 who pay up their dues month by month. The school contains 9 classes, so that there are 9 English teachers. There are, besides, two pandits who teach Sanskrit and Bengali. The headmaster is a graduate, and draws a salary of Rs. 50 per month. The rest are all poorly paid officers, whose salaries range from Rs. 25 to Rs. 8 a month.

The school-house is very pleasantly situated. In front of it there lies a Dighi or spacious tank. A tastefully laid out garden adorns the landscape behind. Lofty peepuls and banyans rise high on the two sides, and the whole scene has an air of quiet beauty about it. The inside of the school-building is, however, hardly in keeping with its attractive surroundings. The school-house consists of one large hall and four side-rooms. The tiled roof rests on mud walls whitewashed with a slight coating of lime. The floor is very damp, nay almost slippery with wet. The walls are very dirty, scrawled over with curious specimens of handwriting. The writings on the walls cast reflections, not always complimentary, on the merits and

demerits of the teaching staff. The building has not undergone any repairs since its erection, and it has therefore a very rickety tottering look about it.

During the recent Pujah holidays my mother took me to her father's house at Rajbati some 30 miles from Lakhimpore. My grandfather is still very hale and hearty, but he looks very solemn, probably from the many griefs and afflictions with which he has been lately visited. He made much of me and tried to keep me at his side. I must confess that this had at first a most depressing influence on my spirits, for I had been looking forward to delights of another kind. I had been dreaming of cricket and football, of fishing and swimming, of *Hudugudu* and blindman's buff, and here I was shut up in a drawing-room with an old man for my only companion. In a few days, however, I was completely won over by the affection of my grandfather. He conceived a strong attachment to me, and I reciprocated it with all the ardour of my youth. Sometimes we sat side by side and fell to comparing notes. My grandfather recalled, for my benefit, his experiences of those good old days when he was a student like myself. He amused me by his narration of the many cruelties and barbarities practised in the Patsalas of his time; and I, in my turn, told him of the incidents of my school-life. Sometimes we beguiled our time by telling stories to each other. My grandfather's stories always began with the king who had two wives, and I told him stories from the *Arabian Nights* and from Lamb's tales from Shakespeare. When our conversation flagged, or when we were tired of relating stories, we fell back upon the ever-delightful poems of Kasidas and Krittibas. I was in the enjoyment of these varied delights when my holidays came to an end, and I had to hurry back to Lakhimpore.

XVII. THE SEASONS IN INDIA.

There are six seasons in India, each season occupying about two months. These seasons are, the summer, the rains, the earlier autumn (Sarat), the later autumn (Hemanta), the winter and the spring. Each season has its own beauties and peculiarities, and these have often been described by Sanskrit poets. Kalidas, in his *Ritusamhara* (a brief synopsis of the seasons), draws very lively pictures of the sights and sounds of the six seasons. In describing the summer, he mentions the burning orb of the sun, and the scorching winds which blight every herb and tree. Dense clouds of dust are blown about by strong drifts of the wind, darkening the atmosphere and blinding the eyes of all who venture to come out into the open air. The fierce and fiery rays of the sun have their effect even upon the wild beasts of the forest. The lion sees the elephant pass by and makes no efforts to seize him. The elephant walks through the woods seeking for

water. In the hyperbole of the poet, you may see serpents crawling within the shadow of the peacock's tail, and frogs sheltering themselves from the sun under the expanded hood of the snake. The pools and the streams are all dried up and the distress to animal life may be more easily imagined than described.

The fierce and scalding heat of the summer is followed by a tremendous downpour from the skies. Dark clouds scud across the sky, and we see nothing but lurid flashes of lightning, and hear nothing but peals of thunder. Rivers and ponds are now swollen beyond their banks, and vast tracts of land are under water. The vegetable world bursts suddenly into new life; the green buds and the gay blossoms meet our eyes everywhere. The peacocks now spread out their "jewelled train" and dance in joy. All out-door work is stopped and the people enjoy a long spell of enforced holidays. Some rivers overflow their banks and sweep away all that lies in their way. Whole villages are sometimes submerged, and hundreds of men are rendered homeless by the cruel ravages of the raging flood. Thunder-storms, cyclones, and tornadoes occur at brief intervals, to the terror and dismay of all.

The rains are succeeded by the autumn, the season of peace and plenty. The war of the elements is at an end, and the plains everywhere look like a smiling and enchanted garden. The orchards are laden with fruits; the crops ripen and are gathered; the poor ryots are for a time relieved of their wants; and a long course of festivities commences. The Durga Puja makes its welcome appearance, and signs of joy and bliss manifest themselves everywhere. The most lovely feature of the autumn is the clear blue expanse of the sky. Occasionally there are specks of white cloud seen flitting overhead; occasionally too a distant peal of thunder is heard; sometimes there is a gathering of a dark mass of clouds; but as a rule we have fair weather with a clear sky and a bright atmosphere. The autumn is also the season of the lily which is justly regarded as the queen of flowers.

The autumn is followed by winter. Winter in India has none of the rigour which is associated with it in England. It appears here in a milder form, and we enjoy for a while the blessings of temperate climate. In the morning the air is darkened with dense fogs; these, however, disperse within a short time, and we have uninterrupted sunshine for the rest of the day. This is the season for out-door games, until with evening the fogs return. The rigours of severe cold are perceived on some nights, but generally the weather is pleasant and agreeable. In many places the climate is both bracing and invigorating. There are, however, some exceptional localities, where winter ushers in a reign of fevers, agues, and the influenza.

The spring is, of course, the most lovely of all seasons. The

cuckoo now pours forth its rich melody, and the southern wind (the zephyr of India) begins to blow. The plants shine forth in regal splendour; and all animals begin to live a life of joy and gaiety. Poets associate this season with Love, and mythologically Spring is the friend and companion of Cupids. "The Bakûi," says Jaydeva, "bends slow beneath its clustering flowers; the sweet Madhavi dispenses its rich odours; the Mullika pours out her ravishing scent, and the humming of numberless bees swells the cuckoo's song." Jaydeva concludes his hymn with—

"In this love-tide of spring when the spirit is glad,
And the parted, yes, only the parted, are sad."

XVIII. THE MANUFACTURE OF SILK.

Silk is of such a fine texture that Europeans formerly believed it to be formed of gossamer floating in the air. Some went to the absurd length of supposing that there were silk trees from which silk had to be combed. That silk was spun out of the body of an ugly worm was regarded as an absurd story. In reality silk issues from two small holes below the underlip of the silk-worm. Two fine threads exude from the two holes, but they are joined into one by a kind of glue, which is produced from the mouth of the worm. The silk-worm moth lays from three to seven hundred eggs at a birth, and these are called the seeds. These eggs have to be hatched by the sun. From each egg comes out a caterpillar, a thread-like worm about a quarter of an inch long. The favourite food of these silk-worms is the mulberry leaf, of which a large quantity is kept within their easy reach. In its eagerness to get at the leaves, the silk-worm comes out of its shell, and then it crawls on from leaf to leaf eating voraciously. The leaves are rapidly gnawed away by its saw-like teeth. After feeding on the leaves for a month or two, the caterpillar, now grown to a size of from 2 to 3 inches in length, ceases to eat. It now begins to spin its silken cocoon, which is of an oval shape, and it is within this that the caterpillar completely shrouds itself. The cocoon is completed within five or six days, and it then becomes the prison-house of the caterpillar. Most of the caterpillars die within the cocoon; some are killed; while some few change into moths, and, forcing their way out of the cocoon, fly out into the open air. There is a popular song in Bengali, in which men are compared to the silk-worms. "Silk worms," says the song, "weave cocoons and allow themselves to be immured within them. They can, if they so choose, make their way out of the cocoons; but they are so silly that they cut short their own existence within the traps which they themselves contrive." In the same way men allow themselves to be entangled in their own snares. They can, if they so choose, extricate themselves. But they are so foolish, that they would rather die an ignoble death

than make an effort to rise into the higher and purer atmosphere of faith and love.

Formerly India and China were the only two countries which reared silk-worms and collected silk. When Europeans came to India, the trade received an impetus by falling into their hands. Nearly 5,000,000 lbs. of raw silk were annually exported from India to be manufactured in Europe. Princely fortunes were made by the European silk-merchants in India. Many of the Natives, too, participated in this influx of wealth. The Native millionaires of the Rajshahi and the Berhampore districts owed their prosperity to this trade. But now the trade has very much fallen off in India. Italy, France, Turkey, and Spain now grow silk on their own account. Bordering, as they do, upon the Mediterranean, their soils are very favourable to the growth of the mulberry tree, and hence their success. They command a vast market on account of the cheapness of the product. Silk is now imported from Europe into India, and the silk factories in different parts of Bengal have a deserted and forlorn appearance, calculated to call a sigh from every passer-by. In spite of many advantages, such as cheap labour, fertile soil, bountiful nature, we are, it is sad to reflect, being distanced by our European rivals in the race for progress and prosperity. And England, whose fortunes are bound up with ours, is, unhappily for us, in some danger of losing her proud position in the commercial world. These melancholy reflections naturally occur to our minds when we think of the decline of the silk-trade in Bengal and in India.

XIX. THE REIGN OF AKBAR.

When Akbar ascended the throne in 1556, he found the Moghul empire in a state of weakness and decline. The Turks, the Moghuls and the Afghans, settled in different parts of the country, had already assumed independence under their own chiefs. The Hindu kings in most places were following the example of their Mahomedan rivals; so that the vast Moghul empire had shrunk within the narrow compass of the districts of Delhi and Agra. On ascending the throne, Akbar's first object was to consolidate his empire on a firm, secure, and permanent basis. In person he led his vast armies against those distant and outlying provinces which had thrown off their allegiance to the sovereignty of the Moguls. He fought many hard-fought and brilliant campaigns and brought under subjection the provinces of Guzrat, Cashmir, Rajputana, Sindh, Bengal, Candahar, and the Deccan.

On the completion of these military conquests, Akbar directed his attention to the internal pacification and organisation of the empire. He divided its vast unwieldy dimensions into

fifteen subahs. These were Delhi, Lahore, Agra, Cabul, Multan, Ajmir, Guzrat, Malwa, Oudh, Allahabad, Behar, Bengal, Khandesh, Berar, and Ahmednagore. A viceroy was appointed to each of these provinces, subject to the supreme authority of the Emperor at Delhi. Each viceroy was assisted by a number of competent civil and military officers, such as the Dewans (revenue officers), the Fonzlars (generals), the Kazis (justices of the peace), and the Kotwals (police superintendents). Akbar maintained and encouraged the village communities, and found them of great service in repressing crime and maintaining internal peace. He kept a strict personal supervision over all his officers, and hence there was not only order and method in every part of the administration, there was also the strictest justice and impartiality reigning everywhere. Akbar made a careful revenue survey of the empire, claiming one-third of the gross produce of the land as imperial revenue. He thus obtained fifteen crores of rupees from the item of land-revenue alone. His forces were maintained at a high rate of efficiency, as he was a regular paymaster and a strict disciplinarian.

Kindness and conciliation was the key-note of his policy. He looked upon the Hindus as his subjects, confederates, and allies, and not as accursed infidels to be treated with cruelty and oppression. His primary object was to effect an amalgamation between the Hindus and the Mahomedans, the two leading races of the Indian empire. Each was persuaded to make some concessions to the other, and the Rajputs bade fair to be gradually assimilated and absorbed in the Mahomedan population. The Hindus he conciliated in general by abolishing all invidious taxes.

Akbar did his utmost to improve the morals of his subjects, both Hindus and Mahomedans. He placed restrictions on immorality; inflicted heavy penalties on intoxication; prohibited the slaughter of cows; prohibited the marriage of boys before they were 16, and of girls before they were 14; permitted the marriage of Hindu widows; tried to stop the immolation of widows on the funeral pyre; and prohibited polygamy amongst the Mahomedans. In short, Akbar was one of the wisest and noblest of the sovereigns the world has seen. His rule was as just and as beneficent as that of Alfred the Great in England, and of Kifig Ramchandra in Oudh.

[N.B.—Students might also mention Akbar's religious views, the delight he took in learned theological controversies, and the friends and associates by whom he was surrounded.]

XX. THE GAMES OF INDIAN SCHOOL-BOYS.

The game most in vogue among the school-boys in this country up to a certain age is certainly the *nekochuri*, the

equivalent of the English hide-and-seek. A pillar or a tree is chosen as the *buri*, or the old hag, and the person who is declared to be the thief leans upon it, and covers his eyes. Taking advantage of this opportunity, the players go and hide themselves. After a while the thief is permitted to open his eyes, and he then goes about seeking his comrades who are in hiding. If he can touch any of them before they have time to run up to the hag, he is released from his position as a thief, and the player touched becomes a thief in his turn. And then the processes are repeated till the new thief finds a successor. If a thief refuses to play on the ground of fatigue or any other cause, he is greeted with a string of abusive epithets arranged in couplets of jingling rhymes. A sample of these is :—

The thief to Burdwan quick does run
A roasted ape he feeds upon.
To Hugly next his steps he bends
While rotten shells to him Heaven sends.

The thief is thus goaded on till he rejoins the game.

The *nuncote* (or the salt go-down) is another very favourite game among our school-boys. The play-ground is divided into six courts, three of which stand in a row on one side, and three on the other. There is a narrow open space running between these squares. The salt go-down is a distinct square lying behind one or another of the six squares mentioned above. The players divide themselves into two parties, each party occupying a row of squares. Those who have the salt go-down on their side of the play-ground are like the besieged, those on the other side being like the besiegers. The two parties stand facing each other on the narrow neutral ground separating the two rows of squares. When the game begins, the besiegers try to get into the courts of the besieged. They run forwards, backwards and sideways, to effect an entrance untouched into the courts of their enemies. Every one on the side of the besieged has to be on his guard, for if one of the besiegers happens to get into a court untouched, it is said to be captured and it becomes a base of operations to the besiegers. The other two courts have to be captured in the same way. And then the salt go-down becomes the bone of contention between the two parties. If it too is captured, then the besiegers are declared to have won. But if they are touched while trying to effect an entrance, they die. Sometimes they all die, and then the besieged are declared to have won the game. This is a very exciting game, requiring great nerve and skill on the part of the players.

The next game of importance is the *dandaguli*, or the bat and the cat. The danda is a tip-cat about 2 cubits in length, and the guli is a short thick bar about a span long and sharpened at the two ends. The cat is placed in the centre of a semicircular hole and is knocked forward by the bat. If the cat thus jerked

forward is caught before it falls to the ground, then the player who had hit it up is declared to be out, and another player has to go in. If the cat is not caught, it has to be thrown back to the player at the semicircular hole, which takes the place of a wicket. The player at the hole defends it with his bat, and is out if he misses the cat, so as to allow it to fall into the hole or into a small circle drawn round the hole. If, however, the cat is returned, or if it falls outside the ring, then the player is given three chances for sending the cat farther off. He strikes the cat at one of the thin ends, and as it bounds he strikes at it again, and sends it flying to distant parts of the field. Let us suppose that the cat has been sent to a distance of 40 or 50 yards from the hole. For every 5 yards the player scores a point. In this way, when 20 points are scored, the game ends. If, however, the player is out before he scores 20 points, his antagonist goes in. Whatever score he makes is then deducted from the score of his adversary. The party that first scores 20 points wins.

One great advantage of these Indian games is that they cost nothing. Moreover, they are not half so rough and dangerous as the English games by which they are being replaced. Now-a-days boys begin with marbles, a game simple enough; but as they grow up they take to cricket, football and lawn-tennis. The indigenous games are looked upon as somewhat out-of-date, and they bid fair to become obsolete in a few years, from no fault of their own.

XXI. KINDNESS TO ANIMALS.

This is a virtue unfortunately more talked about than practised. When a man owns an animal he often has an idea that he can do what he likes with it. He gives it insufficient and unwholesome food, and houses it in a pen or fold, too frequently insufficient in size and imperfectly cleaned. While the poor animal is at work, it is sometimes treated with wanton cruelty. For example in this country the bullock or the buffalo, while groaning under a load much heavier than it can possibly carry, is pinched black and blue, and is beaten with a thick stout cudgel for no sufficient reason. Their tails are twisted so mercilessly that all the bones in those delicate and sensitive structures break. In Europe, horses, dogs and other domestic animals, are generally tended with great consideration and kindness; but even there, foxes, hares, and rabbits are treated with some cruelty in the name of sport.

There is nothing strange in all this. All over the world men are found to take delight in killing and exterminating their fellow-men. War and bloodshed are perhaps less common now than they were in the earlier periods of the world's history. Real brotherly sympathy is not so rare now between man and man as

it once was. But still man fails to show kindness to man, and it would be folly to expect that he would universally extend much kindness to animals.

We must, however, remember that it is as wicked to ill-treat an animal as it is to ill-treat a man. An animal feels as keenly as a man does. It can distinguish between cruelty and kindness as clearly as a man can. This cannot be denied by any one who has studied the habits of our domestic animals closely or carefully. The cat, the dog, the cow, the bull, the goat, and the buffalo all show by unmistakeable signs their appreciation of kindness and their dread of cruelty. And these are arguments which should incline us to be more considerate towards animals than even towards men. A domestic animal is often quite inoffensive, and it can neither return nor resent the injury that we may choose to inflict upon it. It is, therefore, an act of cowardice to subject such an animal to any cruelty.

It is, moreover, an act of the grossest ingratitude on our part to ill-treat animals from whom we receive so many favours. It would be superfluous to point out in detail the many obligations we are under towards our domestic animals. It is by their aid that we till our fields; they are our beasts of burden; they supply us with nourishing food; their hides and horns are used as articles of trade, contributing largely to our wealth and importance. Even their excrements are valuable — used for fuel and manure. In short, they are our greatest benefactors, both in life and in death; and it is the depth of baseness to return cruelty and oppression for the many benefits we receive at their hands. Their patience, their forbearance and their obedience ought on the contrary to make us love them.

Those animals however that are wild and ferocious, must be treated differently. They are our natural enemies, and it is necessary to our own existence that we should destroy them, though even this should be done as far as possible without cruelty.

XXII. A HINDU MARRIAGE.

A Hindu marriage must always be celebrated at night-fall. In the evening the bridegroom's party, consisting of about 40 or 50 persons, if not more, set out for the bride's house in a gay and brilliant procession. Bands of musicians, European and Indian, head the procession. A priest and a barber are indispensable. A few gaudy equipages, containing the father, the uncles and other relatives of the bridegroom, form an essential part of the ceremony. And if the means of the bridegroom's father permit it, the procession must be joined by troops of boys carrying silver sceptres, umbrellas, and various other articles of pomp and magnificence. At the close of the procession is seen the *chaturduala* or the sedan-chair occupied by the bridegroom himself. As a rule,

the bridegroom is arrayed in superb and gorgeous apparel and wears a pith hat adorned with filigree-work and tassels of many gorgeous and brilliant hues.

As soon as the procession reaches its goal, the women of the bride's family blow their conch-shells lustily, and shrill shouts of welcome in the shape of *Ulu, Ulu*, rend the air. When the noise subsides a little, the bride's father comes out to receive the bridegroom's party. With outstretched hands he calls out repeatedly—"Come in, sirs, come in," "Take your seats, please," "I am very fortunate indeed," and so on. The bridegroom has a special seat reserved for him where he sits in company with his younger brothers, cousins, and nephews. Then begins a most edifying conversation between the bride's party and the party of the bridegroom. Formerly, when English education was just commencing, questions were asked in queer English, such as "What designation was put upon you by your father?" standing for the simple query "What is your name?" Sometimes verses in very idiomatic Bengali were required to be rendered in English. The most popular one was a couplet not very remarkable for elegance or perspicuity of meaning which used to be roughly enough translated thus:—

Large large monkey, large large belly,
Ceylon, jumping, melancholy.

Then followed jokes and gibes, not always of the most polished or elegant taste. The bridegroom's party were the universal butts of banter and ridicule. They parried the jokes the best way they could, and did their utmost to turn the laughter against the other side. Time thus flew on swiftly and merrily in sallies of wit and mirth. Then the priests announced that the auspicious moment had arrived and the bridegroom, accompanied by the priest and the barber, was taken to the Zenana.

The first serious item of business in a marriage is the contract or pledge entered into between the bridegroom on one side and the bride's father on the other. The latter, in the presence of the family gods, proclaims—"I, so and so, give you, who are so and so, my daughter, in marriage." The bridegroom replies—"I, such and such, accept your daughter, who is such and such, in marriage." The marriage-bond being thus solemnized, the bridegroom goes into the inner apartments. The bride, all this while, covered up from head to foot with her *saree*, sits beside her father, taking no part whatever in this most important concern of her life. But when the marriage-contract is over, she follows the bridegroom to the *Basara-ghar*, a room specially fitted up for the wedding night. There the bridegroom and the bride sit side by side and are surrounded by a host of young women, who come to amuse themselves in the company of the newly-married couple. The bridegroom now becomes the

centre of attraction and every eye is fixed on him. He is pestered with gibes, flouts, and sarcasms on all sides. He is pinched and pulled by the ears and every kind of liberty is taken with him. If he is modest and shamefaced, as in a majority of cases he is likely to be, he finds his position anything but pleasant. But as nothing is done in malice, he has to endure all his tortures in silence. He is then requested to sing a song. If he can sing well, he rises high in the estimation of his fair audience; but if, as is very often the case, he pleads utter inability to sing, he is dubbed an idiot and a fool. What is needed at this juncture is brass and impudence, and to be wanting in these is considered a serious disqualification.

Next morning he has to enter into a fresh contract with the bride. A holy fire is lit and is fed with ghee in the midst of Vedic rituals. In the presence of this fire, he makes a solemn vow and promises that he will love and cherish his wife eternally. The bride in her turn promises eternal fidelity and obedience. The husband swears—"I will be to you what Ram was to Sita, Nala to Damayanti, Basistha to Arundhati," and so on. The wife swears—"I will be to you what Sita was to Ram, Damayanti to Nala, Arundhati to Basistha," and so on. This completes the marriage-ceremony. Then follow feasts, banquets and various kinds of rejoicings, such as *nautches*, *jatras*, *khemtas*, and the like.

XXIII. AN INDIAN TEMPLE.

A family shrine or a private chapel is an essential adjunct of a Hindu home. Hindus are required to offer their worship there at least twice a day, once in the morning and again in the evening. The family shrine is generally situated in the middle of a spacious court-yard lined with big shady trees, such as the *bakul*, the *jack*, and the *peepul*. The temple generally faces a neat little garden containing flower-plants of various descriptions, such as *bailee*, *chameti*, *juthi*, *jati*, etc. Hindu temples may be of various styles of architecture. In the temples dedicated to Kali and Siva, the most conspicuous parts are the two rounded cupolas rising one above the other. The temples enshrining the images of Ram and Krishna have flat roofs as in the case of ordinary dwelling-houses. The *Panchratna* (i.e. the temple with five domes) and the *Navaratna* (i.e. the temple with nine domes) are justly celebrated for their architectural distinctions.

The temple of *Bisweswara* at Benares, enjoys a world-wide celebrity. It was built by *Ahalya Bai*, the *Marhatta* princess, whose unstinted charity has made her name a household word all over India. The temple owes many of its decorations to *Runjeet Singh*, the *Lion of the Panjab*. To visit this shrine is

the cherished ambition of many a pious Hindu; and large crowds of pilgrims flock to it from the most distant quarters of India. On a *Jōg* (i.e. an auspicious conjunction of stars or planets) the number of pilgrims exceeds a hundred thousand. The priests of the temple earn a princely income collected from the fees and the free-will offerings of the votaries. The God is washed every morning and evening in the water from the Ganges. Every worshipper, as he carries his quota of offerings to the god, strikes the great bell from Nepal, suspended from the arch by means of an iron chain. Almost every part of the worship is accompanied by the richest display of pomp and grandeur; but the *Arati* or the vespers presents a spectacle of the greatest solemnity. The altar is then gorgeously illuminated. The idol is adorned with rich garlands of flowers. Clouds of fragrant smoke rise from the burning incense. The conch, the gong, the bell, the *Damama* (or the Indian drum), the *Kansara* (the tinkling cymbal), are all simultaneously played upon; the hymns of the *Vedas* are melodiously chanted; the votaries go on repeating *bom, bom, bom, bom*, from a hundred throats. At the close of the *Arati* follow singing and dancing. The god is next served with supper; after which he goes to bed "wrapped in a shawl in winter, and a brocade in summer."

A Hindu temple is a very useful institution from an economic point of view. It feeds hundreds of poor people every day from its proceeds. It is a very usual sight to see a large concourse of deformed beggars in and around a Hindu temple. The blind, the lame, the aged, and the sick, find there a ready welcome and a warm hospitality; and the pilgrims who go to visit the idol, always make it a point to distribute alms amongst them.

XXIV. RICE: ITS PLANTING, GROWTH AND PREPARATION AS FOOD.

The rice, grown in Bengal, consists of two chief species,—*aus*, or autumn rice, and *aman*, or winter rice. The *aus* requires but little water for its cultivation. It is sown on *sona* or high lands about the end of Baisakh (the middle of May), and reaped about the beginning of Bhadra (the middle of August). The *Aman* or *Harmantia* rice is the cold weather crop, and forms the great harvest of the year. It is sown in Ashar or Sraban (June or July) and reaped about the beginning of Poush (the middle of December). This crop is always sown on *sali* lands, i.e. low lands which retain more or less water all the time the crop is on the ground. *Aman* rice requires a great deal of moisture; and therefore it has to be grown in a depth of water reaching at least to the height of three-quarters of the stem. This sort of rice is always transplanted.

From the month of April the husbandman is busy preparing his soil for tillage. The first thing he does is to carry to his fields, baskets of manure in the shape of cow-dung, ashes, and the like. These lie in heaps upon the field, and are gradually mixed up with the earth and help to increase the fertility of the soil. While the soil is being prepared in this way, the husbandman anxiously waits for a shower of rain. As soon as it begins to fall, he runs to his field with his team of oxen and the primitive ploughshare. He works in the field till 2 or 3 in the afternoon, and does not return home till he has ploughed two or three plots of land. After the ploughing comes the harrowing. The harrow is a framework made of bamboo, and it is dragged over the fields by a pair of bullocks to break the clods and to level the soil. After the harrowing comes the sowing. Seeds are carried to the field in a basket, and handfuls of them are scattered over the prepared soil. In a few days, if there be timely showers of rain, tender shoots spring up from the field along with blades of grass and young sprouts of weeds. The grass and the weeds are carefully pulled up by the *Ara* or the hand-weeder. In the meantime, showers of rain have descended from the sky, and water several inches deep is collected in the field. The seedlings grow here to a certain size when they are transplanted to other fields. The process of sowing is called *bapan* and the process of transplanting is called *ropana*.

When the transplanting has been completed, the husbandman is eased from his cares. He goes to visit his fields now and then, and all that he has to attend to now is the weeding. Like all other plants, the paddy grows vigorously under a timely and adequate distribution of rain and sunshine. The natural calamities, which the husbandman fears most are—(1) excess of rain, (2) droughts, (3) blights, (4) locusts, (5) field-mice, and (6) birds. It is not in the power of man to contend successfully against any of these, excepting probably the droughts, but even in this his success can be partial only. A husbandman is more completely at the mercy of Nature than any other class of labourers.

Let us now suppose that the stalks of corn have grown into *gach-dhan* or mature plants, and that the ears are ripe. They will now be mowed with a reaping hook, and will be bound into sheaves and then formed into huge ricks. The next process necessary is the threshing. A smooth plank is placed in an inclined plane leaning against a post or a wall or the stump of a tree. Sheaves of paddy are taken down from the rick and are beaten against the wooden plank. This causes the ripe grains to fall out from the slender ears, and the ground is strewn with large heaps of corn. But this rough process leaves many grains still adhering to the stalks, and the treading or trampling process is then resorted to, to clear the stalks of their grains. The stalks are spread over a plot of ground; a thick bamboo pole is fixed in

the centre of this ground and some eight or ten bullocks are yoked to the pole which they are made to walk round and round, thus treading upon the stalks and causing the grains to be loosened from the ears.

The trampling is followed by winnowing. Four men stand in a ring round a vast heap of grain. They carry in their hands four large fan-like winnows with which they simultaneously fan the grains. This separates the chaff or bran, and causes it to fly about on account of its lightness. The winnowing process is succeeded by husking. This is done by a machine known as the *dhenki*. The front or fore-part of the machine is called the *mushala* or hammer, and it is tipped with a thick iron ring, and is made to fall into a pit in which are deposited the grains that are to be husked. The *dhenki* is a horizontal lever which, on being pressed with the feet, rises and falls alternately. The hammer falls into the pit with a heavy thump and this crushes the grains, separating the husks from the grain. When the husked grain is taken up from the pit, the rice is found mixed up with a large quantity of rice-dust. The dust has to be separated from the rice by means of a sifting fan. The rice thus obtained is boiled in water and becomes fit for our food. Among the solid preparations that are made from rice, may be mentioned *khai*, *muri*, *chira*, *hurum*, etc. All of these are preparations of parched rice or paddy. *Pithas* are cakes made from rice-flour. The liquid preparations are *pachwai* or rice-beer; *mada* or rice-spirits; and *paramanna* or rice boiled with milk and sugar.

XXV. THE COCOANUT.

Of all the trees that adorn the Bengal delta, the cocoanut is probably the most beautiful. Its tall, slender trunk, rising high with a graceful bend, surpasses in loveliness and symmetry of form the huge, stately stems of the banyan, the peepul, and the tamarind. The divisions of the joints encircling the trunk, like so many rings, present an agreeable variety to the eye. The branches spread out with a delightful regularity, one hanging down on each side in a most graceful curve. The leaves are thin and long, and shine with a green gloss. The flowers are so exquisite in shape, that our women wear ornaments made in imitation of and named after them. The large fruits, hanging in clusters, are of an oval form, and make a most picturesque show. The banyan and the peepul are types of awe and sublimity; but the cocoanut, along with the fan-palm, the areca-nut, and the bamboo, fascinates our eyes with grace, symmetry, and richness of colour. Cocoanuts, therefore, are planted round the sides of our tanks; they fringe the court-yard of the dwelling-house, and form a lovely enclosure round our gardens and groves.

But beauty is not the sole attraction of this lovely tree. Every

part of it is turned to account in our domestic economy. The long trunk is scooped out to form a light canoe; the branches, when dried, are used as fuel; the stalks of the leaves being bound together, give us the broom; the blades of the leaves are used for fuel in cooking. The flower serves no domestic purpose; but the fruit is very valuable for its many and important uses. The crust of the fruit, when dried, is used for stuffing mattresses, to which it gives the elasticity of an iron spring. The inner fibres of the crust are twisted and woven into ropes and cables; sometimes these inner fibres, rounded into small balls, serve the purpose of lighting a *chillum*. The shell, when entire, forms, the *hubble-bubble*. The milk is a cool, delicious, refreshing drink. The kernel is always a dainty nourishing food, and the oil expressed from the juice of the dried kernel is an indispensable article in the toilet of our women. It is reputed to have the virtue of lengthening the hair and of giving it gloss and softness at a very cheap cost. The various kinds of oils which are now sold in the market, under very romantic and sensational names, are only so many preparations of the cocoanut oil, scented and dyed by the help of some cheap Indian drugs. The medicinal effects of the kernels are also well-known. They are in many cases the only safe remedies against dyspepsia, colic pains, and costiveness.

The cocoanut tree is a source of large income to its owner. In the Mandlghat pergunna a man's wealth and social position are measured by the number of the cocoanut trees he owns. One tree is capable of yielding from 20 to 30 rupees profit in the course of a year. A moist soil is essential for the cocoanut tree, which cannot be reared on a rocky or hard soil. It abounds on the sides of those rivers only whose waters contain in them a large mixture of saline. It grows in wild luxuriance on the banks of the Damodar, the Rupnaryana and the Ganges. This tree is very rare in the N.W. provinces. Hence, the first thing which seems to excite an eager delight in the mind of the Marwari, as he comes down into these plains of Lower Bengal, is the beautiful cocoanut with its feathery leaves and its rich clusters of fruits.

XXVI. THEATRES.

A theatre is above all things a place of entertainment. Its scenic decorations charm the eye; its music delights the ear; its poetry captivates the soul; and the incidents and the situations which are enacted on the stage excite an interest through their novelty and variety. This is as it should be. For it must not be forgotten that we go to a theatre after our day's toil. A continual grind is hurtful to the body and to the mind. Hence rest and relaxation are absolutely necessary for a healthy body and a sound mind. And it is to enjoy this rest and relaxation that we

go to a theatre. The first aim of the manager of a theatre ought therefore to be to contribute to our delight and mirth by a gay succession of lovely sights and sweet sounds.

But, besides contributing to our pleasures, a theatre may very wisely be made to serve other important purposes. The tragedies may very well be of service in purifying our hearts and elevating our morals; and the comedies may be of material use to us in checking our vices and restraining our follies and absurdities. The moral lessons need not be conveyed in a dry, dull, or abstruse manner. They ought to be artfully interwoven in a highly interesting or amusing plot. Many of Shakespeare's plays are conceived in this strain. Julius Cæsar, The Merry Wives of Windsor, and Henry V. are, perhaps, the most conspicuous examples in which moral teaching goes side by side with amusement.

The modern theatres of Bengal are chiefly the results of a close imitation of the English stage. Our theatrical language consisting of such words as "scene," "stage," "motion-master," "prompter," etc., is a clear indication of this. The names themselves of the native theatres are all in English. Though foreign and exotic, theatres have taken a deep root in the country, and they have all but supplanted the various forms of musical entertainment indigenous to the soil. Many noble pieces have been produced on the boards of these theatres. Some of these, such as the "Bilwamangal," the "Bibaha-Bibhrat," and the "Natyabikar," are very well suited to the social and moral needs of our countrymen. But it must be confessed with regret that in the native theatres we are often greeted with worthless, impure, and immoral trash. It is to be hoped that with the progress of education a higher moral tone will be reached in our society, for that alone will purge away the gross obscenities and impurities which now disfigure our theatres. The theatre-going public, in our country, consist too often of young men of a profligate character. The poor actresses are often compelled to throw aside the little modesty that is still left in them, at the special request, and for the entertainment of an unworthy audience. It would be idle to expect any reform in the moral tone of our theatres until there is an improvement in the morals of the audience, as the manager of the theatre is forced to conform to the tastes and wishes of the bulk of his audience.

XXVII. A CYCLONE.

A cyclone is a peculiar sort of high wind accompanied by thunder and lightning and copious rainfall. In a storm and a hurricane the course of the wind seldom changes, but in a cyclone the wind blows successively from various directions; it has, in fact, a circular motion, cyclone literally meaning a *whirl*.

wind, from the Greek word *cyclos*, a circle. The first indication that we have of the approach of a cyclone is a murky sky with patches here and there of clouds looking like the smoke that issues from damp fuel. As the wind rises, increasing masses of clouds are seen chasing each other in the sky. As it rises still higher, the clouds seem to descend nearer and nearer to the earth. The current of the wind is neither steady nor regular; its force seems to rise and fall alternately at certain intervals. At first it blows with a hoarse moan, which soon becomes a booming sound. Every blast seems to be more terrific than the one that preceded it. After a certain time the high gale is accompanied by sweeping gusts of rain, which seem to pierce the skin like a shower of steel. Now the whole sky becomes overspread with dark clouds; the gale blows harder and harder; the rainfall becomes more and more copious every instant.

Several hours, sometimes a whole day and more, pass away in this manner. Sometimes there is a lull, and the weather seems to brighten up, but this calm is very deceptive; for it is soon succeeded by a hoarser roar of the wind and a heavier shower of rain. At last the crisis comes: the rain comes down in heavy masses and the wind resumes incredible force and velocity. Nothing is then heard except loud plashing of rain and the louder boom of the wind. Everyone hides himself in a corner of the house, which seems to be shaken to its foundation and even begins to rock dreadfully. We expect sudden and instantaneous death, and even thoughtless triflers bend their knees in prayer to that God who is our last refuge in the hour of peril. This critical stage lasts for about three or four hours: then the cyclone abates and finally ceases.

The ravages and the devastations committed by a cyclone, during the three or four hours of its critical stage, are perfectly appalling. It tears up by the root even the hugest banyan trees, with their hundreds of hanging roots and shading branches. The branches are broken and blown to a distance. Hundreds of palms, cocoanuts and areca-nuts lie flat. The rivers swell beyond all proportions, overflowing their banks and sweeping away everything in their path. The strong cables of ships and steamers are snapped off as if they were so many silken threads. Huge merchant-men are lifted bodily out of the river or the sea and are stranded upon the shore. Not mud-houses only, but solid masonry buildings, are razed to the ground, and hundreds of persons buried under the ruins. Sometimes thatched cottages, with all their inmates, perched upon the roof, are seen floating down the raging flood. We see nothing but ruin and desolation on all sides.

Even a cyclone, however, is not without its benefits. It clears the air, and removes from it the noxious gases and miasma,

which are so destructive of life. The cyclone carries in it a substance called "ozone," which has the wonderful virtue of decomposing foul and unwholesome gases, which cause fever, cholera, and other fell diseases. It is in the tropics that noxious miasma is most likely to form; and it is in the tropics that cyclones occur at certain intervals. We thus see "a soul of goodness in things evil."

XXVIII. TRAVELLING: ITS ADVANTAGES IN ENLARGING THE MIND.

Travelling is nowadays rightly considered as an indispensable part of our education. In England, a young man now sets out on his tour through the continent, if not through the world, to give, as it were, a finishing touch to the education he has received in schools and colleges. The knowledge gathered from books is of a somewhat theoretical character, and in order to make it really useful, we must supplement it by a varied experience of the practical side of life and nature. The wisest teachers of all times have almost always been great travellers. Homer, Pythagoras, Herodotus, and Plutarch; Milton, Addison, Gibbon and Macaulay; Darwin, Spencer, Dickens and Thackeray, were not only men of original genius: they had also enriched their minds with a comparatively long course of travels, and by acute observation of the lands and the people they had seen. Johnson, who never travelled much, had the sagacity to perceive the advantages of seeing foreign lands. Boswell reports of him:—"He talked with an uncommon animation of travelling into distant countries. He said that the mind was enlarged by it, and that an acquisition of dignity of character was derived from it. He expressed a particular enthusiasm with regard to visiting the walls of China."

Shakespeare, who was probably no great traveller himself, has said, "Home-keeping youths have most homely wits." He further calls these stay-at-home people "dull sluggards." In point of fact, home-abiding men are like *kupamanduks*, toads in a well, who are well content with what they have or see around themselves. They have few higher aspirations of any kind, and they have a contempt for all reforms and innovations. They are wedded to the superstitions and prejudices of their country, and can never free themselves from them. They see nothing good or imitable in the world abroad, and have an inordinate pride or vanity regarding the absolute perfection of their native land. This forms a serious drawback to their material and moral progress. For progress is secured by striving, and striving implies a previous discontentment with our surroundings. When we are content with, and even proud of what we have, we lack the

stimulus necessary for effort or struggle, and the result will be merely an idle and stupid conceit, unfavourable alike to individual and national growth.

Wherever we may roam and whatever nations we may visit, we shall always find something to admire and imitate, if also something to condemn and avoid. Every nation is working out its own destiny in its own way. It is adapting itself to the circumstances in which it is placed, and in so doing it cannot help developing in itself intellectual and moral traits, some of which on examination will be found to be worthy of our approval, if not also of our imitation. In its social, political, and religious institutions, every nation will present some aspects and features which it will be for our good to study. And even its defects and failures will carry with them important and pregnant lessons for our guidance. In short, if we travel with our eyes open, we shall acquire both knowledge and wisdom; we shall enlarge our sympathies and shall find ourselves better equipped for our journey through life.

When we visit historic scenes, scenes where the course of history has been altered, we are carried back to the past, the imagination is fired, and we are enabled to grasp and realise the events of history more vividly than we could ever have done by merely reading books. This close intercourse with bye-gone ages cannot but expand the memory and the imagination. It was while listening to the monks of the Ara Coeli Church in Rome chanting on the site where once stood the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, that Gibbon determined to write his immortal history. Macaulay owed his inspiration to his personally visiting the places he was about to describe. Who can visit the Kurukhetra without being elevated, for a while, into regions of poetry and epic grandeur; and who can behold the battlefield of Plassey, without being awe-struck by the momentous issues that have followed in the train of the victory achieved there?

Then the natural scenes which pass before our eyes in the course of travel, cannot but enlarge our intellectual horizon. When we stand face to face with a lofty mountain, when we see peak rising upon peak, when we see clouds rolling below us, when we survey wide expanses of lakes or rivers, our minds and hearts are, as it were, raised to a higher atmosphere. The grand spectacles of nature produce a corresponding greatness in the mind of the beholder. To a native of Bengal, mountain scenery is more than a revelation. It seems to chase away all narrowness of the mind, and fills us with a sublimity we never felt before. Scales seem to fall from our eyes, and we are better able to appreciate Nature and Man from the auspicious day when a cloud-capped rocky summit first breaks in upon our vision. Formerly travel was a travail; it entailed unusual hardships, and meant a lavish expenditure of money.

But now that travel has become so easy and so cheap, we should miss no opportunity of travelling through foreign countries, or, at any rate, through India, the land of our birth.

XXIX. THE RACES INHABITING INDIA.

The oldest inhabitants of India, known under the common name of aborigines of non-Aryans, comprise various stocks or races. Their conquerors, the Aryans, have represented them as "black-skinned and flat-nosed," as "disturbers of sacrifices," "gross feeders on flesh," "raw-eaters," "unclean," "lawless," and "without gods and rites." In the Rig-veda, they are represented as "senseless, false, imperfectly speaking, unbelieving, unpraising and unworshipping." "The non-Aryans," says the Mahabharata, "are wanting in manners and religion. They marry their superiors : they drink human blood ; they live far from all human society ; they are illiterate ; they fall in love with the wives of their preceptors ; they are beastly and sinful."

The non-Aryans, as they exist now, are found scattered in small groups over different parts of India. There are "traveller's tales" of dog-faced cannibals (near the Bay of Bengal), who daub themselves with red earth, and whose only conception of God is an evil spirit spreading disease. Near the hills in Southern Madras are (1) the *Paliars* living on jungle-products and mice, and worshipping demons ; (2) the *Maudevers*, a nomadic tribe, wandering over the hills with their cattle ; and (3) the *Kadars* who live by the chase. The *Nairs*, among whom polyandry is still in vogue, live in south-western India. In the Vindhya ranges live the *Bhils*, who were formerly the terror of the neighbouring country, but who were formed into a peaceful and settled community about 1827. In the Central provinces live the *Gonds*, who hold their bows with their feet, drawing the string with both hands with such force that they can send an arrow right through the body of a deer. In the Tributary states of Orissa live the *Patuas*, so called from their women wearing only a few strings of beads around the waist, with a bunch of leaves before and behind. In the hills of Assam live the *Akas*, who lurk as thieves in the cotton-field, and who are said to be the eaters of a thousand hearths. Then there are the *Santhals*, living among the hills on the valley of the Ganges in Lower Bengal ; and the *Khonds* who live in the forest-covered ranges rising from the Orissa coast. The *Khonds* and the *Santhals* have given up their primitive modes of living by plunder and warfare, and are now both peaceable and well-to-do races. Some *Santhals* have received a liberal education, and some are reckoned among the graduates and under-graduates of the Calcutta University.

As for the Aryan races, they are too well-known to require a lengthy account. The Hindus, who were the first to conquer India, were also the earliest to migrate from their homes in the plateaus of Central Asia. The Hindus are a fair-skinned people, with chiselled, handsome features, the Rajputs specially possessing a loftier and grander presence than probably can be found anywhere else in the world. The Hindus justly boast of a glorious civilisation in the past, and it is hoped that their future will also be a bright record of achievements in the various departments of literature, art and science. The next band of Aryan conquerors, who followed in the wake of the Hindus, were the Arabs and the Persians. They too have a glorious past, and they too are striving to regain their place in the scale of nations. The English, who now rule over India, are also Aryans, as their complexion and their language testify.

XXX. ASIATIC AND EUROPEAN DRESS CONTRASTED.

The poorer classes of the inhabitants of Bengal are not encumbered with many clothes. The dress of an ordinary shop-keeper consists of a *dhoti* or waist-cloth, worn round the loins, and reaching as far down as the knee; of a *chadar* or cotton shawl thrown carelessly over the shoulders, and a pair of shoes or slippers. So the ordinary clothing of an average husbandman is a coarse *dhoti* and a scarf thrown over the shoulders. This scarf is sometimes worn as a turban, especially when the husbandman is working in his fields. In winter, some wear a *markin* sheet, and those who can afford it wear a waist-coat, or a shirt not reaching beyond the waist. At present, some wear a cheap woollen stuff, known as *wrapper*, and this they think to be an effective protection against the chill blasts of the season.

The women wear a *sari*, or a thick coarse piece of cotton cloth, a part of which is wrapped or folded twice round the upper half of their body; the lower half being enclosed in a single or double fold of the same clothing. In the N.W. provinces every woman wears a tight jacket, and the *sari* hanging in several graceful folds in front looks like a gown. As for the better class, known as *Bhadraloka*, their costume is only slightly different from that of their poorer brethren. They too wear the *dhoti* and the *chadar*, only with this difference that the stuff they wear is finer and of a richer quality than the poorer classes can afford to buy. Besides the *dhoti* and the *chadar* they generally wear a shirt, both while at home and while out on business or pleasure. On grander occasions, a *Parsee* or a *China* coat is worn over the shirt, and this completes their toilet. The richer classes wear the same articles of dress with little or no difference. On occasions of marriage or grand festivities, men and women

put on silken or satin dresses rich in texture and brilliant in colour.

Those who serve in Government or other offices have to dress themselves in a somewhat curious style. Their dress is a strange mixture of the Hindu, the European, and the Mahomedan costumes. The shoes, the pantaloons, and the stockings are wholly English; but the *chapkan* and the *choga* are relics of the Mahomedan supremacy. The *chadar* and the turban are to be traced to the Hindu period. The *chadars*, gracefully twisted for the purpose, are made to pass over the *chapkan* in several folds. There are many who wear the *chapkan* and the *chadar* along with the *dhoti* even in their office suit. The women of the upper and middle classes have taken to wear bodice, jacket, chemise, and some other European articles of dress, to the horror and disgust of the elderly matrons of our community. The men, too, are fast gravitating towards the European style of dress. From these signs it may be safely predicted that in a few years more the European standard of dressing will be the only one known in this country. Whether we wish it or no, it is probably our destiny to be Europeanized in costume, as well as in other things.

And yet the European costume has hardly anything to recommend it for wear by Indians. It is not cheap, a very important consideration in this country. It is not suited to the climate of this tropical region, and to wear a pair of stockings is a positive torment to most persons. It is not graceful, for it is too tight and too plain to produce an impression of pomp or grandeur. A costume must be loose and flowing to appear graceful or attractive. The European dress consists of a pair of close-fitting trousers, a shirt, a coat, and a waist-coat, a collar, a neck-tie and a hat. There is hardly anything superfluous in this, every article of dress having its use. It may be a very convenient style of dress in cold climates, and is certainly well suited for active exertion, but there is little reason why we should adopt it in this country. Our own way of dressing is very cheap, very graceful, at least to our eyes, and is eminently suited to the requirements of our climate. The costume of European females is very decent and very graceful; but it is far more expensive than the ordinary dress of Indian ladies, and therefore unsuited to a poor country like ours. The fact that the Mahomedans have largely adopted our costume is in itself a proof that it is the best that can be devised under the existing circumstances.

XXXI. THE FUNERAL RITES OF THE HINDUS.

As soon as a Hindu feels certain that he is dying, he performs the two ceremonies known as *Chandayan* and *Prayschitta*. By the former is meant the rite of purification, in the course of which certain gifts have to be made to the Brahmans. The latter means

expiation, and it consists mainly in the recital of certain mantras in the presence of the family gods. When a Hindu is at the last gasp, he is brought out into the court-yard where he is made to lie at full length upon his back, with a tulsic plant at head, and a spade at his feet. His friends and relatives now stand around him in a ring, and shout at his ears the names of the four deities—the Ganges, Narayan, Brahma, and Rama. In the meantime, preparations are made for carrying the corpse to the funeral pyre. A large tree is felled and bundles of dry wood are carried to the burying-ghat, by men whose caste permits them to perform these unpleasant duties. A litter is prepared to carry the corpse, and the kinsmen of the deceased are called together to do what is needful. An earthen pitcher, a mat, a hubble-bubble, a torch, made of twisted straw, and various sundries have to be kept ready against the cremation.

The litter is made of two bamboo poles placed parallel. Seven pieces of bamboo are placed across between these poles, and are fastened to them by strong ropes of straw. Upon this frame the corpse is laid at full length with its face up, the two thumbs being tied together and the two great toes. The litter is borne by four persons who must be of the same caste as the deceased. The chief mourner, who wears a very poor dress, consisting of a very short *dhoti* and a very short scarf, precedes or follows the litter with the earthen pitcher in hand. Some servants follow with the torch, the spade, and a long bamboo pole. As the party proceeds, they cry out at short intervals, "Baluhari, Haribole," striking fear and awe into the hearts of the hearers. In the villages a retired and unfrequented spot by the side of a river or a tank is chosen for the burning of the dead. On arriving here the corpse is dipped in the adjoining tank or river, and is dressed in new clothing. A show is made of giving *pindas* or cakes made of rice boiled in milk to eat, of *panit* or the betel leaf to chew, of the *hookah* for smoking. The mourners then lay the corpse on the pile. The chief mourner, who is generally the eldest surviving son, then sets fire to the pile and applies the burning torch to the face of the deceased. This is such a revolting process that some feel it to be a cruel and barbarous rite. Next comes the breaking of the bones of the corpse, and this, too, is a most hideous spectacle. The fire has to be poked with a long sharp bamboo pole which often pierces the corpse. There seems indeed to be no pity and no tenderness for the dead. Everybody seems to be impressed with the idea that the body is no part of the dead. It is like a cast-off garment, and thus it is treated with a cruelty and an indifference, which may naturally seem to be barbarous and inhuman. When the body is consumed, the fire is extinguished, and a diligent search is made for those parts of the body which might have withstood the flames. These are carefully picked out and deposited in a small earthen vessel;

for it is necessary that they should be thrown into the Ganges after a certain lapse of time.

On the fourth day after the death, the daughter of the deceased has to perform a *śradh*. All that she is permitted to offer to the dead is uncooked food, consisting of raw rice, and vegetables with spices and condiments. At the conclusion of the ceremony the Brahmins and the caste-men of the dead are sumptuously fed. On the tenth day, in the case of a Brahmin, the son or the sons, as the case may be, perform the *śradh* on their part. Very costly gifts, sometimes of silver, if not also of gold, have to be made to the Brahmins. Learned Pandits are invited from distant parts of the country, and each of them receives a fee proportionate to his learning or erudition. Hundreds of men and women are fed for several days. Thousands of paupers also have a meal provided for them, each of them receiving a present of a four-anna or an eight-anna piece on his return home. The whole affair is conducted on such a large and liberal scale that many families are impoverished for life through the heavy drain which this custom puts upon their purse. Then at the end of every month a *pind* has to be offered to the dead. At the end of the year the *sambatsarik* is held with great eclat. On every anniversary of the date of death, another offering is made, this is continued to the third or fourth generation, and then the dead sinks into oblivion.

On the death of a Brahmin, every member of his tribe regards himself as unclean for ten days. They all abstain from eating fish or flesh, and do not allow themselves to be shaved. On the death of a Khetria, the period of uncleanness extends over twelve days; a Vaisya's period of impurity lasts for fifteen days, and a Sudra's for a month. On the day of purification the kinsmen of the dead shave themselves, bathe in the river, and put on a new *dhoti*. The sons and the nearest relatives go barefooted, and they are prohibited from indulging in any kind of luxury. They eat only one meal, consisting merely of boiled rice; they have to sleep on mats or coarse blankets, and are not allowed to use pillows or curtains for comfort or convenience. They are not even allowed to chew *pan* or betel-leaves. A Hindu's respect and solicitude for the soul of the departed are unique and deserve the highest commendation and admiration.

XXXII. EARTHQUAKES.

The inside of the earth is a burning mass of liquid matter. As this burning matter cools, it contracts, and causes a vacuum in the space from which it has receded. When this vacuum occurs the upper crusts of the earth are drawn down to fill the space. This necessarily produces rents and fractures on the surface of the earth. By the violent drawing in of the earth, the liquid ocean around is set in motion, and flows forward like gigantic waves, and finds an outlet through the rents or fractures referred to above. The motions of these gigantic waves are supposed to be the causes of the earthquake.

The first indication that we have of an earthquake is a loud rumbling noise heard below the earth. This noise is somewhat like the bursting of a thunderbolt, or the explosion of a cannon, or the passing of a heavy-wheeled carriage along iron rails, or the angry roar of a chafed lion heard at a short distance. The noise is accompanied by a violent rocking of the earth. The walls of the house seem to bend forwards and backwards, the floor seems to heave up and down, the arches crack and burst, and if a house is old and rickety, it will come down with a crash, sometimes burying all the inmates under the *debris*. The trees rock their branches on high, although there may not be a breath of wind stirring anywhere. The tanks, the wells, and the rivers seem to be in great commotion; the fishes are evidently seized by a panic and receding waves leave them upon the shore in a state of distress. The shock generally lasts for half a minute or so. Sometimes several shocks occur at short intervals. Usually the first shock is much smarter than any that succeed it.

During an earthquake the ground floor of the house and the open space in or near the court-yard are considered the safest places. In those districts where earthquakes are of frequent occurrence two-storeyed buildings are very rare, and every dwelling-house has in front of it a spacious open compound, where one may seek shelter during the earthquake.

From the frequency and the smartness of the shocks in the Northern Bengal districts, specialists have surmised that a crater is in the course of formation somewhere near Maldah and Jalpigoorhi. This, if true, would be a great calamity, for it would mean the annihilation of life and property to an incalculable and incredible extent.

According to a popular myth among the Hindus earthquakes are due to very grotesque causes. This earth is supposed to rest on the hoods of a hydra-headed monster called the Serpent of *Ananta* or Eternity. This huge python is supposed to feel, every now and then, an overwhelming sense of fatigue or exhaustion on account of the load it has to carry. And then, with a view to obtain a momentary relief, it transfers this earth from one of its hoods to another. The earthquake is looked upon as a very great calamity, and hence to witness it is supposed to involve a great sin. This sin has to be washed away with *Sankistans*, prayers, and thanksgivings. An earthquake is also supposed to be a visitation from God, who has to be appeased with gifts and presents.

XXXIII. TIGERS.

Tigers are of the feline tribe, belonging to the same species as cats, lions, jaguars, leopards, etc. They are armed with teeth and claws, and spring upon their prey, which they rend limb from limb. They are very active and have wonderful strength. They are nocturnal in their habits, and their eyes are so extremely sensitive to light that they can see well, even when it would appear quite dark to other animals. They are met with in various parts of Asia, but it is in the jungles of India that the largest and strongest of the species are found. Royal or Bengal tigers, which are of the fiercest disposition, are generally about 8 feet long and 4 feet high, but sometimes we come across specimens from 10 to 12 feet long. In point of cunning and ferocity, the tiger distances all other animals, and in point of strength the lion, the mis-called king of beasts, is no match for him.

A tiger is a very handsome animal. Its colour is of a bright orange buff, and its back and legs are beautifully striped with black. It has no mane, but it has great whiskers like the lion and the panther. It is ~~or~~ lithe and graceful make, and its skin is smooth and glossy. It hides itself in a jungle during the day, which it generally spends in sleeping; but during the night it prowls for miles by the banks of the rivers or ponds where animals repair to quench their thirst. It stalks its prey, getting nearer and nearer, till at last a well-directed spring brings down the unfortunate victim. Tigers very often visit localities inhabited by men, where they will first seize stray sheep and bullocks, which they kill by tearing their throats, and then carry away to the jungle, where they can feed upon their prey undisturbed. A tiger, when it once tastes human blood or flesh, becomes a man-eater, and it appears ever afterwards to prefer this kind of food to all others. It is frequently seen that it will pick out the cowherd in preference to the cattle he is driving.

Tigers are, however, capable of being tamed, and in various parts of Bengal, *fakirs* are seen going about with them in their train. These tigers seem to be completely under the authority of their masters. They are rarely fed with meat, and their nourishment chiefly consists of boiled rice and *ghea*. Raw meat renders the tiger bloodthirsty and seems to awaken its dormant ferocity. The fakir forbids all persons to touch the animal, and this tends much to preserve its docility.

Tigers can swim well, and there are instances on record of their seizing men from rafts and boats. A tiger once got on to a raft and killed all the persons that were on it. For a time he was entirely at the mercy of the stream, but as soon as the raft came near to a bank he jumped on to the shore and escaped into the jungle. When the tiger goes out prowling for its prey, the tigress is left at home to feed and defend the cubs until he returns. In defending her young the tigress becomes doubly ferocious.

Tiger-hunting is a most exciting but dangerous sport. Hunting parties are organised by Rajahs, Nawabs, Chiefs and Sirdars, to which some Europeans are generally invited. Seated on elephants, they go out into dense jungles, and here their attendants start the game. Then follows a deadly encounter between the tiger and its pursuers. Sometimes the tiger escapes unhurt, after assailing and mauling to death several of its foes; but as a rule, the rifle proves too powerful, and he is brought to the ground and bagged before he can cause any mischief to anybody.

XXXIV. INDIAN FRUITS AND FLOWERS.

Nature is more bountiful in India than probably in any other country of the world. Here every month brings forth its own treasures and its own wonders. The products of different climates are here laid at our feet, and Goldsmith's description of Italy is eminently applicable to India :

Whatever fruits in different climes were found,
That proudly rise or humbly court the ground;
Whatever blooms in torrid tracts appear
Whose bright succession decks the varied year;
Whatever sweets salute the Northern sky,
With vernal lives that blossom but to die;
These, here disporting, own the kindred soil,
Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil.

Among the most notable of the flowers of India may be mentioned the following,—the *champak* with its golden petals, its tapering form, and its pungent odour; the *lotus*, the queen of

flowers, acceptable alike to gods and men, with its grey petals and its fine delicate perfume ; the jasmine or the *madhair*, wafting its rich and sweet scent around ; the marigold, with its bright and varied hue and its strong smell ; the rose, the *bael*, the *juthi*, the *jati*, the *tagar*, etc. Most of these flowers find an honourable mention in Indian poetry. A lady's finger is compared to the *champak*, her face to the *lotus*, her teeth to the *kunda*, her nose to the *teel* (sesamum), and so on. The lotus and the champak have found due recognition even in English poetry. The two flowers deserving special mention are, however, the *bakul* and the *kamini*. The latter, as its name implies, is a very soft flower, whose petals fall off at the slightest touch ; but it scatters its fragrance over a vast area, and it has a white and sparkling lustre most pleasing to the eye. The *bakul* has not much beauty of colour or form ; but its exquisite scent places it in the very front rank of flowers. The *shephalika* is also a most attractive flower ; it has a shapely form, and the colour is snow-white. In respect of rich and delicate odour the *sephalika* can fitly bear comparison with the *kamini*, if not also with the lotus. The rose, originally an exotic, has been domiciled in India, and it is now reared in abundance.

As for the Indian fruits, it will suffice to mention the following :—The mango, which must head the list, because it is as delicious as it is nourishing. The jack is a very large fruit, one of them being often enough to feed from 10 to 15 persons. The palm-fruit is also large, but it is not half so delicious as the mango or the jack. The pomegranate, the pine-apple, the guava, and the orange are comparatively small in size ; but they are in very great request owing to their rich and sweet taste. The cocoanut with its sweet milk and its pulpy kernel is very tempting. The banana is highly prized by natives and Europeans alike. Among the fruits of the creeping and climbing plants we might mention melons, cucumbers, gourds, pumpkins, red potatoes, white potatoes, etc. These are as a rule very sweet, the number of bitter, pungent, or sour fruits being comparatively very small in India.

XXXV. PUNDIT ISWARA CHANDRA VIDYASAGARA.

No name in modern Bengal is more honoured than that of the subject of this sketch. Pundit Iswara Chandra's great natural powers, his deep erudition, his large-hearted philanthropy, and his blameless life, have for ever endeared his name to his countrymen. When this great and good man died, full of years and honours, the grief expressed at his loss, and the homage paid to his memory,

showed how high a place he had secured in the hearts of all. Every Bengali felt, in the lines of Shakespeare :—

“He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.”

We shall here briefly point out a few of the many claims that he had upon our gratitude and veneration.

Pundit Iswara Chandra Vidyasagara may be rightly styled the “Father of modern Bengali prose writing.” Up to so recent a date as the beginning of the present century, Bengali writers had paid their attention almost exclusively to metrical composition. It was reserved for the European missionaries of Serampore, Carey, Marshman, and Ward, to show the capabilities of the language for becoming a popular medium for the expression in writing of everyday and commonplace ideas. But for some time there was little attempt on the part of prose writers at literary elegance or refinement of style. It was not until Pundit Iswara Chandra began to write that any great improvement became visible. His style, marked as it was by clearness, melody, and dignity, first disclosed that it is possible to express in Bengali prose, with both exactness and elegance, the most abstruse ideas and the most delicate shades of meaning. Subsequent writers modelled their style upon that of Pundit Iswara Chandra, and the elevation of our mother-tongue to its present position of literary dignity, constitutes no small claim upon our gratitude to the man to whom mainly this improvement is due.

Vidyasagara was also an authority in Sanskrit literature. It is probable that, with his great talents and sound scholarship, it was not beyond his powers to have produced some original work in Sanskrit that might have come to be regarded as a classic. But he contented himself with the humbler, more useful rôle of popularising Sanskrit literature among his countrymen. His grammars and commentaries have done much to place Sanskrit within the easy grasp of any earnest student. He was also a well-read English scholar, and by his translations into Bengali, he has introduced to his countrymen more than one of the master-pieces of English literature. In the sphere of social reform the Pundit worked long and with vigour. He lifted up his powerful voice against the practice of polygamy among Hindus, and it is to his arguments that we owe the almost complete discontinuance of the practice among educated Bengalis. He was a strong advocate for the legalisation of widow-marriage. In all his efforts in these directions he gave ample proofs that he was actuated solely by large-hearted sympathy with suffering, and unselfish enthusiasm for the welfare of his country.

It has been well said that Vidyasagara was not only an “ocean of learning,” as his title implies; he was also an “ocean of benevolence.” The large income derived from the sale of his

books was spent mainly in various charities. Hundreds of destitute families were supported, and hundreds of poor lads were educated at his expense. Widows and orphans he took under his special care. Of him it may be truly said that "his pity gave ere charity began."

We will conclude this short sketch with a brief notice of his life and works. He was born in 1821 at Bissingha, a village in the district of Midnapore. His father, Thakurdas Banerjea, was a poor man, his salary amounting to only eight rupees a month. Iswara Chandra was admitted into the Sanskrit College, Calcutta, in 1829. As a student he soon gave promise of his future eminence by winning nearly all the prizes and scholarships for which he could compete. He graduated in his twenty-first year, and was appointed Head Pundit at the Fort-William College. Subsequently he became in turn Assistant Secretary, Professor of Sanskrit Literature, and lastly Principal of the Sanskrit College. The last appointment he resigned in 1850, and thenceforth up to the time of his death, in 1894, he devoted his life to study, and works of benevolence.

In addition to writing or editing numerous text-books for schools in Bengali, in Sanskrit, and in English, he published the following works of a more permanent character :—

Betal Panchabhinshati, or "The Stories of the Twenty-five Demons."

Vranti-Bilash, a prose translation of Shakespeare's "Comedy of Errors."

Bidhava-Bibaha, a treatise on Widow-remarriage.

Bahu-Babaha, or "Polygamy."

Sitar Banabas, or "The Exile of Sita"; and
"A Review of Sanskrit Writers and their Works."

XXXVI. DWELLING-HOUSES—NATIVE AND EUROPEAN.

The building materials used in most cultivators' houses are merely bamboo, mud, and straw. The walls are made of mud inserted between twigs of bamboos. The thatched roof consists of a bamboo framework covered over with two or three layers of straw. The roof is supported partly on the wall and partly on bamboo poles serving the purpose of props and posts. The house consists of two or three rooms ranged around a court-yard. The furniture found in the house of an ordinary peasant consists of a mat, a wooden box, a blanket, a looking-glass, a few brass and earthenware vessels, a hookah, and the implements of agriculture. All business is transacted on an outer terrace which is called the *dorah*; and the seclusion of the females is as vigilantly observed in a peasant's hut as it is in the palace of a Potentate.

The ordinary shopkeeper lives in a house made of planks and beams, possibly with the addition of brick and mortar. Sometimes he lives in a tiled house consisting of five or six rooms arranged on the same plan as the peasants' huts. The principal articles of furniture in a well-to-do shopkeeper's house are a cotton carpet, a mat, a plank bedstead, one or two stools, a strong wooden chest, a cane basket, a brass lamp, brass plates and cups, and a few pictures and images.

The house of a *Bhadro-log* or gentleman consists of two parts, the inner and the outer. The outer consists of a drawing-room, a family chapel, a spacious terrace for holding *jatras* and nautches, and a shrine for the worship of Durga. Each of these buildings has an outer verandah and an inner room. The outer verandah is spacious and airy, and it is here that men sit and talk and smoke. The inner rooms are without much light or air, and they are generally kept shut and hence they have generally a very close smell about them. The inner part consists of seven or eight rooms, arranged on the four sides of an open square. Married couples have a room allotted to them, where they sleep with their children. Several widows often occupy one apartment, and the grown-up girls generally sleep in the same room with them. The court-yard is used for several purposes, such as the cleansing of the kitchen utensils, bathing, throwing away the refuse and so on. Each bedroom has a separate entrance, and is entirely cut off from all the other rooms, so that perfect privacy is maintained everywhere. Besides, there must at least be two kitchens; one for the widows, who are strict vegetarians, and never allow their kitchens to be polluted by fish or meat, and the other for the rest of the family. In the outer part there is generally one reading-room, which is used by the school-boys of the family. The furniture in the house of a *Bhadro-log* consists of chairs, tables, bedsteads, mirrors, sofas, and various other articles of Western luxury.

Europeans attach much importance to questions of sanitation, and therefore make it a point to live in comfortable houses where they may enjoy sufficient light and air. There is indeed an air of elegance, comfort, and order in a European residence which we vainly look for in a native house. In a European house in India there is a large verandah terrace enjoying the advantages of free ventilation. This leads into a spacious drawing-room, which is as a rule tastefully fitted up with rich and elegant furniture. Besides the drawing-room a European residence must also contain a library, a dining-room and an office. The dining-room must be airy and spacious and must have a large table in the middle. The library is intended for study and is furnished with shelves well stocked with books. All business is transacted in the office. In short, a European residence, even of the middle class, is a picture of comfort and

elegance, an abode of health and cleanliness; while a Native house is too often dirty, and is in danger of becoming a hot-bed of discomfort and disease.

XXXVII. THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS.

These examinations may be divided into the following classes :—(1) Examinations in Arts comprising the Entrance, the F.A., the B.A., and the M.A. Examinations; (2) Examinations in Law, comprising the B.L. and the D.L. Examinations; (3) Examinations in Engineering consisting of the L.C.E. and B.C.E. Examinations; and (4) Examinations in Medicine consisting of the L.M.S., the M.B., and the M.D. Examinations. Formerly, to have passed the higher examinations in any one of these branches was the surest passport to wealth and honour, but now few but those who take the highest places in these examinations can expect to be employed in high or lucrative situations. The bulk of our University graduates are thrown upon their own resources, and are left at the mercy of chance in striving to eke out a livelihood for themselves and their families.

It would be a falsehood to disguise the fact that the first and primary object of many who seek a University education is not so much to acquire learning for its own sake, as to secure the means of earning a livelihood. This has often been urged as a reproach against the *alumni* of the Calcutta University, who have on this ground been represented as a body of needy and greedy adventurers whose idol is money. It has to be remembered, however, that most of our University men are recruited from the middle classes who are compelled, not only to earn their own bread, but to feed a shoal of hungry relatives dependent upon them. Learning for its own sake is a grand thing, and it may very well recommend itself to the leisured classes as a noble and worthy pursuit. But those who have to maintain themselves by industry must be excused if they make the earning of their livelihood their first and foremost aim.

Another reproach laid at the door of our Universities is that they have up to now failed to elicit or encourage that "divine spark" which must be an essential feature of true scholarship. It is, indeed, very sad to reflect that though hundreds of brilliant lads have gone out of the university with a brilliant promise, not one of them has been able to enrol himself amongst the teachers or sages of the world. Not to speak of success, very few have even attempted to lead the life of a true scholar devoted to life-long study and culture. The *alumni* of the Calcutta University might plead several excuses to account for this unfortunate state of things. The depressing influence of an alien rule, the effects of the climate, the want of a reading public, able and

willing to appreciate literary work of any eminence, may be and have been urged in self-defence with some show of reason. The real explanation however lies somewhat deeper. There has been a complete revolution in our tastes and in our methods and lines of thinking. The old methods and the old standards have been rudely expelled from our midst, and we have been called upon to adapt ourselves, at a very short notice, to new forms and new models. We have thus been required to join in an intellectual race with nations who have had the start of us by several centuries. We are like children vainly striving to keep pace with grown-up persons. Let us hope that the disadvantages we are now labouring under will vanish in time, and that we should soon equal, if not surpass, our European competitors. The progress achieved within a few years reflects great credit upon the Indian people. And if we persist with courage and resolution, we are bound to achieve still greater success in future.

XXXVIII. THE BAZAR IN AN INDIAN VILLAGE.

Most of the villages in Bengal do not boast of a bazar. They hold a fair every other day, or, it may be, twice a week, to which people resort for buying and selling. It is only where the people have risen somewhat in wealth and importance that we shall find a bazar existing. A bazar in a small village consists of two parts—a *chawk* or open square, and permanent stalls or shops erected around the chawk. In the chawk several temporary stalls are to be found for the purpose of selling fish and vegetables. Those who sell fish appropriate to themselves a conspicuous part of the chawk. The fisherwoman sits on a four-legged stool or on a plank, and has a board placed before her. On this board she arranges her fishes, and as the customer comes, she takes up her scales and weighs them out as required. The usual price ranges from 2 to 3 annas a seer; but if the fish be with spawn, or if they be large and very fresh, a heavier price is demanded. In some places where fishes abound, the price is fixed, not by weight, but by bulk and size. The fisherwomen are very dirty: the smell of their trade clings about them, and they are coarse and vulgar in their language. They are very great adepts in the art of higgling and haggling over a bargain, and if a customer proposes too low a price, they do not hesitate to sprinkle their fish-water over him. It takes them from three to four hours to sell their wares, and then they leave their stalls and go home with empty fish-baskets on their heads.

Next to the fisherwomen sit the vegetable sellers. They spread out before their stalls fresh fruits and vegetables of all

kinds in a tempting row. You find there herbs, bringals, pumpkins, radishes, cabbages, and potatoes. In agricultural districts vegetables are never sold by the seer, but by basketfuls, each basket being priced at 3 or 4 annas. The dealers in these vegetables are generally peasants, and they are very simple and artless.

At some distance sits the betel-leaf seller. A betel-leaf is more of a luxury than a necessity; but yet the poorest of the Indian villagers cannot dispense with it. Next to the betel-leaf seller sits the tobacconist: he also counts his customers by hundreds. This completes the list of the temporary stalls, which generally become empty by midday.

Among the permanent stalls erected around the chawk, those of the grocers deserve special mention. These sell all things—rice, green crops, sugar, salt, oil, fried rice, *murki*, *batasha*, and sweetmeats of various kinds. Troops of women are seen coming to the grocer's shop, some asking for a pice's worth of articles, and some even going down to one-half and even one-quarter of a pice. Those who speak of a gold coin for India will see the difficulties in the way of their proposal by visiting, for a short while, a grocer's shop in an Indian village. It is very usual for a customer to ask for a quarter of a pice worth of salt. Now a quarter of a pice is equivalent to $\frac{1}{256}$ th of a rupee, and therefore to about $\frac{1}{1280}$ th of a sovereign, at the rate of exchange current in 1894. Next to the grocer sits the dealer in cloth, whose trade is usually very dull, for clothing is almost a superfluity in this tropical climate. Therefore when he gets a customer into his clutches, he thinks it hard if he cannot make a profit of cent. per cent. At some distance from the cloth dealer sits the *bania*, who is also a grocer, though of a more respectable type. He sells areca-nuts, dill, cinnamon, pepper, cloves, chillis, and various other spices and condiments. He keeps an assortment of papers, pens, nibs, inkstands, copybooks, and other aids and appliances of village scholarship. He also sells patent oils and patent medicines, which, if we are to believe in the advertisements, are able to cure all the diseases which flesh is heir to.

An Indian bazar is the truest mirror of village life. Here we see peasants and rustics in all their native simplicity, and the shopkeepers with their proverbial cunning and falsehood. An Indian bazar also reminds us of the fact that life in India never changes. The social and political revolutions which disturb the upper classes in cities and towns never reach the majority of the Indian population, who live in their ancestral villages just as their forefathers did centuries before. It is in the village bazar that we stand face to face with the nation, and get an insight into its real characteristics.

XXXIX. ECLIPSES.

All eclipses, solar or lunar, are looked upon as inauspicious sights by orthodox Hindus. The reasons alleged for such a view of very ordinary natural phenomena are simple:—The Sun and the Moon are looked upon as pious Brahmins, and they are supposed to be devoured by the *chandals* (Pariahs), Rahu and Ketu. Now a Brahmin dying such a violent death under such revolting circumstances would be a ghastly spectacle, and any one who should have the misfortune to witness it, would consider himself defiled body and soul. It is only by bathing in the Ganges that he can hope to purify himself internally and externally. When Maharajah Nandacoomar was executed, the spectators set up a universal yell, and, with the most piercing cries of horror and dismay, ran and plunged into the Ganges to wash away the sins contracted from having viewed such an unholy spectacle. Out of a feeling somewhat akin to this, men and women run to the river-side as soon as they see an eclipse. Those of the women who stay at home set up a loud yell of “*Ululu*,” and blow their conches, while men sound their cymbals, ring their bells, and strike their gongs to indicate their horror and dismay at the appalling calamity. Processions of *sankistan* parties come out singing and chanting the name of Hari, as if for the purpose of supplicating that Almighty Being to rescue the Sun and the moon out of their terrible danger. Over and above all this, Brahmins perform *sraddhs* to purify themselves, and every one thinks it incumbent upon himself to make some gifts to Brahmins and beggars with the object of being absolved from the sin of having seen a Brahmin die a violent death.

This however is a popular belief for which there seems to be no foundation in the religious books. The legends connected with the eclipses are as follows:—When nectar was churned out of the ocean, it was distributed share and share alike among the gods present at the scene. Rahu and Ketu had been away, and put in appearance when it was too late. They asked for their share of the nectar, and they were told that there was no nectar to be had. On this they loudly clamoured for food. They opened their jaws wide, as if to devour the universe. And then in order to appease them, it was decided by a council of the gods that Rahu should devour the Sun and Ketu the Moon at certain intervals. No reasons are given as to why the two monsters should disgorge the heavenly bodies after having once swallowed them.

The astronomers of India probably had found out the true cause of the eclipses, solar or lunar, for had this not been the case they could hardly have calculated the dates on which an eclipse should occur. It is very curious however to observe how science and superstition seem to exist side by side in India, without any body

ever feeling anything like an incongruity between the two. The astronomer who calculates the date of an eclipse will be the first to join the mob in their superstitious bath in the Ganges.

The lunar eclipse is caused by the shadow of the earth falling upon the moon, the earth intervening between the moon and the sun. The solar eclipse is caused when the moon happens to intervene between the earth and the sun.

XL. HOLIDAYS AND HOW TO SPEND THEM.

A holiday, as the word itself implies, was originally intended to be a day set apart for religious and devotional purposes. Its chief use lay in enabling us to forget our daily cares and anxieties and to be in holy communion with our Creator. A holiday is now often considered as a period of gaieties and festivities, when you are expected to dress yourself to the best advantage, to take rich food, and to swagger about with a jaunty air. By such acts a holiday is abused and a valuable opportunity of obtaining moral or physical improvement is wasted.

There are some who turn their holidays into working-days. Their life is a continual grind, and the grinding becomes all the more merciless and ceaseless on a holiday, because of the leisure it affords from distraction. This is a most penny-wise and pound-foolish policy. Labour, in order to be fruitful and useful, must alternate with rest, for, as the proverb has it, "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

Rest however does not consist in lethargy and indolence. The most advisable form of rest is engaging ourselves in some delightful change of pursuits. The choice of such pursuits will be determined by our personal tastes and likings. If we have a poetic bent of mind we shall find the greatest enjoyment in reading works of poetry. Those who have a natural scientific bias ought to go about making holiday excursions and rambles into the country, with a view to collect rare specimens of plants and animals; or, if we live in great towns and cities, we might utilise our holidays by visiting museums and zoological or horticultural gardens. Those who have a taste for studying men should go about travelling, taking care to make a due note of all that they observe. Theatres, public lectures, public shows and entertainments may also be largely utilised upon a holiday; for these too serve to supplement the education we receive in schools and colleges.

A certain number of holidays ought to be set apart for sports and amusements. These afford a great relaxation to the mind, without which no continual or strenuous application to study or business is possible. A game at chess or a game at cards is very useful in chasing away the noxious humours of the mind. Nay more, these games give a certain tone and elasticity to

the mind, very favourable to hard and diligent work. Some sort of bodily exercise should also be practised ; for by so doing, we shall lay by a fund or store of health, vigour, and vitality, which will be of eminent use to us when we return to our work. A holiday should thus be made a contrast to the working-day. The dull and tedious drudgery of the working-day should make room for healthy, cheerful, and lively recreations during the holiday. Let us so use our holidays that we may return to our daily work with renewed zeal and vigour and increased self-respect. Boys however ought to be warned against running into excess. Many of them engage themselves in wild and dangerous sports and games for hours at a stretch, and the result is they become liable to attacks of various diseases. When they come back to school, they are found to have suffered in health, and many precious months have to be lost in bringing them round. Sometimes again there is such an utter want of discipline and such a total negligence of studies, that when the boy comes back to school his teachers find his mind a *tabula rasa* "a clean slate," and they have much ado in bringing him back to his former state of efficiency. A boy, therefore, should exercise great moderation and self-restraint in the regulation of his holidays.

XLI. THE INDIAN CROW.

Crows are amongst the ugliest birds in existence. Their comparatively long legs and their misshapen feet render them unsightly objects. Their colour black as jet has nothing glossy or shining in it, and the patch of grey round their neck adds, if anything, to their ugliness. They are rather large-sized and have no grace or symmetry in any part of their form. Their movements, whether they be flying or hopping about, are awkward, and when they swoop down from a height, they have neither the ease of small birds nor the majesty of the large ones. In short there is nothing in their appearance to recommend them.

They are the most greedy and voracious of all birds. They feed upon rice, milk, sweets of all kinds, vegetables, and fruits, but nothing seems to come amiss to them. From the carrion rotting on the fields to the garbage thrown upon the streets, everything unclean appears to be a delicious dainty to them. Hence they are looked upon as abominations, and whatever they touch has to be thrown away as contaminated and defiled. They are thus the greatest plagues to Hindu women. In order to check their depredations, a crow is sometimes killed and suspended by the neck at the house-door with the wings spread out.

There is something horrid and dissonant in the cry of a crow. It is not only without melody, it is positively harsh and offensive. The cry is considered ominous by orthodox Hindus, and if a crow is heard cawing at midday in front of your house, you

apprehend death and disaster in your family. The crow is a favourite of the god of death, and sinners in hell have their eyes pecked at by crows. On account of their ugliness, their filthy habits, and their ravenous appetite, crows are never domesticated in India. Yet they are probably the most domestic of all birds. They frequent our houses from day-dawn to sunset, and they build their nests in the neighbourhood of the most populous quarters of cities and towns.

In Indian fables the crows play a very important part. They are represented as unscrupulous adventurers always bent upon cheating and victimising others. They are more than a match for Mr Reynard, and many stories are current regarding the clever and ingenious tricks they play upon all. Once upon a time a very clever boy was going about the streets with a tempting *sandesh* in his hand. A crow saw this, and resolved to have a bite at it. The clever boy perceived this, and threw the *sandesh* into his mouth and held his lips close, inwardly chuckling at his own cleverness. But the crow was not to be so easily baulked of its purpose. It perched upon the boy's head and began to strike at his head with its beak. The boy naturally began to cry out, then the crow came down, seized the *sandesh* from his open mouth and flew away. It is said that in Dacca a crow is sometimes made an accomplice in setting houses on fire. A cake of charcoal is fastened to the feet of a crow with a very slender piece of thread, and the cake is then lighted. The crow flies away and perches upon a thatched roof. The cake is dropped there because the crow does not like to have a piece of thread dangling at its feet. Then the thatched roof catches fire, and the incendiaries have to be employed for rebuilding the house. Nothing good or peaceful is ever associated with a crow, and it is therefore justly hated and detested by all.

XLII. THE TELEPHONE.

It is a well-known fact of physical science that sound is produced by vibration or trembling of the air. When the parchment of a drum or the metal of a bell is struck and caused to tremble, a sound is heard so long as the trembling continues, and the sound may be suddenly stopped by pressing the hand on the parchment or the metal, so as to cause the trembling to cease. If the drum were placed in a room from which all the air had been pumped out, no sound would be heard, however hard the parchment were struck. We see, therefore, that the trembling of the parchment is communicated to the surrounding air. This air, in its turn, communicates its trembling to the membrane called "the drum of the ear," so that a sensation of sound is carried by the nerves to the brain. Now, if the parchment of the drum be connected by a rod of wood, or by a stretched string

or wire, with that of another drum at some little distance from the first, the sound of the first drum, when struck, will be repeated by the second drum. For the vibrations of the one parchment are carried along the connecting rod, or string, or wire, and reproduce themselves in the distant parchment, which thus repeats the original sound. We see then how a telephone, fairly efficient for a short distance and in a straight line, can be constructed. A thin plate of metal is put at the bottom of a short tube with a wide opening at the top. This plate is connected by a stretched string or wire with a similar plate, also placed at the bottom of a tube. The speaker places his mouth near the opening of the first tube: his voice makes the plate vibrate, and the vibrations are carried along the wire to be repeated by the second plate, which thus reproduces to the listener, whose ear is placed near the opening of the second tube, the very sound uttered by the speaker. The above are the main principles of the old short-distance telephone, and they were known and applied long ago. But the instrument has in recent times been brought into more general practical use by the application of magnetism and electricity. An electric current is made to pass along the wire from the mouth-piece to the ear-piece in the two tubes. This electric current carries its vibrations along the wire with far more rapidity, accuracy, and distinctness, and for a much longer distance than the sound vibrations could travel along the rod or string. Thus communications by voice are now possible between places far apart. One of the telephones most recently set up in Europe is that between Berlin and Vienna: the voice of a man speaking into the mouth-piece at the one capital is distinctly heard by the listener in the other capital, though the cities lie more than 400 miles apart.

In India the telephone is used mainly between one place and another in the same city. Almost every large business office uses the telephone to communicate with its agents or with other firms. The Burra Bazar cloth merchants have introduced it into their houses, and the prices of the wares are regulated by question and answer from shop to shop. The use of the telephone is not unknown in private houses in large towns like Calcutta. It may be readily understood how convenient it is for a man of business to be able to send a message from his home to his office or *vice versa*.

There is little doubt that, as science advances and the manufacture of telephones becomes cheaper, the use of the instrument will become more general in both business and private life.

XLIII. THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS OF BENGAL.

Besides rice or paddy, the Bengal peasants produce several other kinds of crops in the course of a year. The only other

cereal crops in Bengal besides rice are wheat, which is sown on high lands in October and reaped in February; barley, which also is sown on high lands in October, and reaped in March. There are also several varieties of green crops or pulses, such as *chhola* or grain sown in September and cut in February; *matar* or peas sown in October and reaped in February; *masuri*, *mug*, *arhar*, *kheusari*, all sown on dry land in September and cut in February or March. Many kinds of oil-seeds are also grown in Bengal. *Sarisha* or mustard; linseed or *machina*; *til* or sesamum; *rendi* or castor-oil seed; and *sukarguja* are all sown on dry land in October and cut in March. Then there are the vegetable crops, among which might be mentioned *alu* or potato; *sakarkand* or sweet potato; *sankalu* or potato white as conch; *baigoon* or brinjal; *mula* or radish; *pyaj* or onion; *rashoon* or garlic; cucumber or *shasha*; gourd or pumpkin, consisting of *low*, *kumro*, *tarmuja*, etc.; *ada* or ginger. Most of these are sown in September or October and gathered in February or March. Only *baigoon* is sown in July and gathered from October to March, and ginger is sown in May and gathered in October. We might also mention *patal* and *haluda* or turmeric. Among other valuable crops, the most note-worthy are the *ak* or sugar-cane, the *neel* or indigo, the *tunt* or mulberry, and the *paru* or betel-leaf.

The same piece of land is sometimes made to yield two, three or more crops in the course of the year. The *sali* lands, i.e. the lands growing the *aman* or winter rice, are allowed to remain fallow every third or fourth year. The *sona* lands, or lands raising the *aus* or autumn crop, are never allowed to remain uncultivated. The *sali* lands generally yield one crop, and can never yield more than two. But the rotation of crops is very rapid on *sona* lands. The peasant cuts a crop of sugar-cane in March from a piece of *sona* land. He then passes his plough through the field, and a crop of *til* or sesamum seed is sown, which is cut and garnered in May or June. The soil is then well ploughed and sown with *aus* or autumn rice, which is reaped in September or October. After the rice crop is removed, the field is again ploughed twice, and a crop of mustard is sown. This ripens and is cut in January or February, when the field is again well manured and ploughed, ready for another crop of sugar-cane, which is planted about April.

The produce of a *bigha* ($\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre), would be from fifteen to twenty maunds of unhusked rice or paddy. This would be worth from Rs. 6 to Rs. 8. Of this nearly 3 Rs. have to be paid as rent. Then we have to deduct the price of the seeds and the cost of labour, so that from the main crop of the year a profit of about 1 or 2 rupees per *bigha* is made annually. If the field grows other crops, it will yield an annual profit of 2 Rs. more,

so that a husbandman makes about 4 Rs. per *bigha* in a good year. It is no wonder therefore, that the peasantry of Bengal, as a class, are almost always heavily in debt. They can hardly procure two meals a day, and are indeed much worse off than almost any other class of labourers.

XLIV. HINDU CASTES AND THEIR SUB-DIVISIONS . AS AT PRESENT EXISTING IN BENGAL.

The highest castes among the Hindus of the present day in Bengal are six in number. They are arranged below in the order in which they rank in public esteem : (1) The Brahmans, are the highest caste in the Hindu social system. They are now employed as priests, landholders, Government servants, clerks, merchants, and agriculturists. In many places it is considered derogatory to the caste of a Brahman to pursue agricultural occupations. An ordinary Brahman now seldom reads the Vedas, never assists others at worship, never teaches the Vedas, and rarely himself worships. He has no objection to receive gifts from anybody, but he seldom makes any gifts. Such a Brahman has very much lowered himself, and he has no spark of that spiritual pre-eminence which once was his essential characteristic. He is as worldly as the other members of his community. (2) The Khettryas are the warrior caste. They too have fallen from their pristine position of glory and greatness. Some of them are landlords and some traders. But the large majority are employed in military or police service as privates or constables. Some of them are doorkeepers, some messengers, and some cultivators. (3) The Baidyas are the physician caste. They profess to have been descended from a Brahman father and a Baisya mother. They are a very influential caste in Eastern Bengal, and are landholders, Government servants, pleaders, barristers, and so on. (4) The Kayasthas are the writer caste. They are ~~not~~ Sudras although they trace their descent to the Khettryas. The Kayasthas yield to none in wealth, learning and respectability. They follow the same vocations as the Brahmans or the Baidyas, and are frequently landholders, traders, Government servants, clerks, and so on. There is hardly anything in common between a rich Kayastha and a poor one. The former is like a high caste Brahman and the latter an abject and degraded Sudra. (5) The Bhats are heralds. On occasions of marriage and *sradh*, these recite poems, which they compose often impromptu, in praise of the families and the individuals from whom they expect any largesses or rewards. They wear the sacred thread, but are held very inferior to Brahmans. No Brahman will condescend to smoke the same hookah with them. To all intents and purposes they are Sudras, and occupy a status even lower than they. (6) The Acharyas are astrologers and

fortune-tellers. These hold much the same position in society as the Bhats mentioned above.

Next to these high castes are some which hold a very respectable rank in social estimation. These are *Napits* or barbers, *Kumars* or potters, *Kamars* or blacksmiths, *Tellis* or oil-pressers and oil-sellers, *Tamlis* or *pan*-sellers, *Gandha-baniks* or grocers and spice dealers, *Malis* or gardeners, flower-sellers, and makers of pith hats, *Sankharis* or shell-cutters, and *Kansaris* or braziers and coppersmiths. These castes, with some others, are said to be *jal acharnya*, i.e. castes from whom a Brahman can take water without loss of caste. There are however some Sudra castes who may be said to occupy an intermediate position, i.e. who are neither esteemed nor despised. Among these might be mentioned the *Madaks* or sweetmeat-makers, *Goalahs* or milkmen and cowherds, *Tantis* or weavers, *Shekras* or goldsmiths. There are several Sudra castes which are very much despised, and even their touch is regarded as an abomination. Among these might be mentioned *Jugis* or weavers, *Sunris* or wine-sellers, *Dhobas* or washermen, *Pods* or fishermen, and *Bagdis* or fishermen, cultivators and day-labourers. *Subrana-banikas* and *Sadyops*, though some of them are very rich and very influential, are looked upon as very inferior castes.

Sometimes sub-divisions among castes are determined by the localities in which men reside. Thus Brahmans are divided into *Rashis*, *Barendras*, etc., as they inhabit one part of Bengal or another. The Kayasthas are in the same way divided into the *Uttar* (North) and the *Dakhina* (South) *Rashis*. An enumeration of all the sub-divisions of even a single caste has thus almost become an impossibility through these complicating circumstances.

XLV. THE LIFE OF A SAUNYASI.

A Hindu of the three higher castes was in older time required to be a Saunyasi at the fourth or last stage of life. A Saunyasi must live solely on alms, and must renounce all the pleasures and active pursuits of life. As a visible emblem of this, he takes a *danda*, a long bamboo cane with seven knots in one hand, a *kaman-dalu* or a gourd scooped and dried, in the other, and an *agina* or antelope's skin under his arm. Thus equipped, he is supposed to be placed beyond all caste restrictions; so that on entering this stage he burns his sacred thread, mixes with all, partakes of food cooked by anybody, and spends his days and nights in deep and devout meditation. His *guru* gives him certain instructions, which he religiously follows. The spirit of these instructions will be seen from the following rites and observances. A Saunyasi must bathe early in the morning, and must rub his whole body with ashes. Ashes are the symbols of death, and the Saunyasi who covers himself with these

indicates that he is prepared for death. The Saunyasi is restricted to one meal in the course of a day. He is never permitted to chew the betel-leaf. For a Saunyasi even to look at a woman is a grievous sin. He wears only wooden clogs, for he is defiled if he goes barefooted or puts on leather shoes. He thus leads an austere life, and serves as a model for those who wish to acquire salvation rather than worldly pleasures and honours. His presence has the wholesome effect of lifting us out of our ignoble wishes and desires.

The next duty which a Saunyasi imposes upon himself is *Joga*, or union with the Supreme Being. In order to effect this the Saunyasi has to put himself in certain postures. Assuming these postures, he restrains his breath and stops his ears with his thumbs, and closes his lips with the little finger and the ring finger, while the middle finger is pressed upon the nostril; all this is supposed to give a keener vision to the mind's eye, with which alone God is to be seen. Some Saunyasis profess to have enjoyed the "beatific vision." Others boast of having acquired from these practices miraculous powers and virtues. Trailanga Swami of Benares was thus supposed to have been able to sit and walk upon water without sinking. Some are supposed to have acquired a wonderful longevity by the aid of *Joga*. Many wild and marvellous stories are current regarding the powers of the successful Saunyasis. Modern Theosophy has lent its sanction to these wild stories, and has even tried to place them on a scientific basis, but its efforts have not hitherto been crowned with success.

Many years ago a live Saunaysi or Jogi was dug up in the Sudarbans and brought to Bherkailas as a curiosity. He used to sit in a posture of devotion, with his eyes shut, and he never opened his lips. Many cruelties were perpetrated upon him. His flesh was torn with pincers. Blazing wicks and burning charcoal were pressed against his skin; bottles of spirituous liquors were poured into his mouth; and rich dainties were crammed down his throat. He was immersed in the river and forcibly kept under water for several minutes. He never spoke, never uttered a complaint, and never opened his eyes, but he died from the effects of these inhuman cruelties. If only a half of what has been reported of him be true, he must have been a wonderful man indeed, and his story goes far to corroborate and substantiate the notion that Jogis are endowed with marvellous and mysterious powers.

XLVI. THE INDIAN CUCKOO.

The cuckoo is a very ugly bird. It is uglier than even the crow. Its red eyes give it a most hideous look. There seems to be neither grace nor symmetry in its shape, and its movements

too are clumsy and awkward. Yet it is the prince of birds. Its rich, melodious, two-fold voice has invested it with a poetic and romantic halo, such as has seldom been accorded to any other bird. Like the skylark it may be described as an "ethereal minstrel"; it is "the blithe new-comer," "the embodiment of melody and song," "a disembodied voice." In Sanskrit it is mentioned as the herald of spring, the messenger of Cupid, the gay inspirer of love and delight; and, indeed, when the bird pours forth its rich strains of melody, the world is enraptured, and men and women are carried beyond their everyday life into a region of poetry and romance.

The cuckoo is a migratory bird. In this country he makes his appearance with the spring, when the mango-blossoms first begin to bud. It generally fixes its residence in the topmost branches of a leafy tree, and keeps itself invisible while uttering its "two-fold voice." It stays till the monsoon breaks out, and then it flits off to other countries. It lays its eggs in the nest of the crow, which hatches them and tends the young ones with a motherly care. The young cuckoo is nourished with insects until it can fly, when it quits the nest and shifts for itself. The cuckoos, which migrate in large numbers, associate and live together while journeying from country to country.

The rich and peculiar note of the cuckoo has made it a favourite theme of poets. Wordsworth, in his exquisite ode, says that the cuckoo tells to the valley its tale, comprising an account of the lands it has visited and of the peoples it has met with in its journey round the world. Other poets have referred to the enviable lot of the cuckoo, inasmuch as it never experiences the rigours of the winter, and always enjoys the genial warmth of the sun. It always eats choice food, of which it gets plenty, and it never undergoes the drudgery of rearing young. Boys, when they hear it sing, imitate its lay, and this seems somehow to inflame its anger, so that its song goes on increasing in loudness, till the boy stops out of sheer fatigue.

XLVII. INDIAN JUGGLERS.

India has ever enjoyed the reputation of abounding in wonderful tricks of jugglery. Ibn Batuta, the famous Chinese traveller, mentions one trick and describes the wonderful effect it had on him. He says:—"A Jogi assumed the form of a cube and rose from the earth, and in this cubic shape he occupied a place in the air above our heads. I was so much astonished and terrified at this, that I fainted and fell to the earth. The emperor ordered me some medicine, and upon taking this, I recovered and sat up. The cubic figure still remained in the air just as it had been. The companion of the human cube now took a sandal and struck it upon the ground as if he was angry. The sandal then ascended

until it was opposite to the cube. The sandal then struck the cube upon the neck and it gradually descended to the earth. From this I took a palpitation at the heart, and I was not restored till the emperor ordered me more medicine."

Indians were once very clever at the exhibition of the trick known as the mysterious disappearance. A handsome young girl, dressed as a bride, is led into the room. An open wicker-work basket resembling a bee-hive in shape and form is then brought. The girl sits down on the floor in the centre of the room and is covered over by the basket. Over this, the conjurer drings a couple of sheets so as to hide her entirely from view. A conversation then ensues between the juggler and the girl, in which the former accuses the latter of improper conduct. The girl acknowledges her crime, but supplicates for mercy. The conjurer unsheathes his sword, and to the horror and dismay of all runs his sword through and through the basket in every direction. Shrieks of pain are heard from within the basket; blood streams out from under it, and a faint suffocated groan proclaims to the spectators that the deed is done. The conjurer next tells the spectators that he has been well avenged on his wife for her bad behaviour. He proceeds to kick over the basket and exposes to view, not the murdered wife, but the bare floor of the room. No woman, no trace of blood is to be found. Then the murdered wife enters by the door of the room as scatheless as any of the party present.

A Mr Smyth tells of another wonderful trick. A rupee was placed in his hand and he was asked to think of some country in Europe. He thought of France, and when he opened his hand, he found in it a five-franc piece, a French coin. The coin was passed on to another Sahib. He thought of America and the coin was changed into a Mexican dollar. The coin was never touched by the juggler and yet it underwent three changes.

We may conclude with a few tricks exhibited by Hassan Khan. One day he took a watch from a lady and flung it into a tank. Then he asked the lady to go into the next room and hold out her hand for her watch. She did so, and both the watch and the chain, dripping wet, came into her hand. Hassan Khan's powers in this direction were marvellous. Without any regard to time, place or circumstances he could at will produce a bag of sandwiches and cakes, or beer, wine, and brandy of any mark and quality required. He did not bring them forth from his own person or with his own hand. He would simply warn the company that the thing was coming and suddenly the bag or the bottle would become visible to the spectators suspended in mid-air. It is no wonder that he should have been credited with mysterious and miraculous powers.

XLVIII. FISHES AND FISHERMEN.

In several districts of Bengal fishing affords a means of livelihood to a large number of men and women. Like most other occupations among the Hindus, fishing is hereditary; the fishing castes being Kaibarta, Kent, Malā, Tior, Jalia, Bagdi, Dulia, Bauri, and so on. Some of these castes live by fishing alone; some ply a double occupation of fishermen and palankin bearers; others take up agriculture or some other pursuit as an auxiliary means of livelihood. There are very few fishermen among the Mahomedans.

Fish is consumed by almost all classes of the people, excepting the Baisnavas, and the widows of the Brahmans, Baidyas and Kayasthas. The fish-eating population is estimated at 95 per cent. of the total inhabitants of Bengal. Dried and salted fish is eaten by the lower classes and by the Mahomedans. In Eastern Bengal, salted Hilsa, even in a decaying state, is eaten with great avidity, even by the women of the very highest classes.

The principal varieties of fish are rui, katla, mirgal, bata, balbosh, coal, chitol, hilsa, changan, chingri, kai, magur, shole, tengra, punthi, chela, ban, and pahda. Of these some are found in tanks, and some in tanks and rivers alike. Various methods of catching fish are employed in this country, some of which we may describe. Branches of trees and thorns are sometimes tied together and thrown into the river where there is little or no current, and small fish and prawns take shelter therein and are captured with a net called *sikti*. Sometimes in a shallow tank a *dourajal* or drag-net is drawn along from one side to the other by two sets of men, one holding the upper ends and the other the lower. This is a very effective method, for it allows no fishes to escape. Then there is the *gauri jal*, which is made to stretch from one side of the tank to the other, fastened to two poles erected one on each side. When the waters are disturbed by troops of wild boys, the fishes in their terror swim about and get entangled in the meshes. Sometimes fishes are caught by the *pheti-jal*, which is worked thus:—A net is fastened on a triangular bamboo frame, and is held fast by a man, who stands quiet, and keeps it spread before him with a strong grip. Another man goes in front of the net and disturbs the water violently with a view to drive the fishes in, and as soon as the one holding the net feels a fish within it, he suddenly raises it. The rod and line are also frequently used as means of catching fish. Sometimes, again, a troop of fishermen kindle blazing torches, and walk with these along the banks of the rivers. The lurid glare of the torches attracts the fishes, and as soon as they come near the shore they are struck with a spear and killed. Fishermen may occasionally be seen catching fish

with no other weapon than their hands. They can feel the presence of the fishes with their feet, and taking a sudden dive catch hold of them with their hands.

Fishes must be taken to the market early in the morning ; for it is then that they are bought for the morning as well as the evening meal. Hence fishermen have to get up at about 4 in the morning to ply their trade. They come home at about 6 o'clock laden with their spoil, which is carried to the market by the elderly females of their family who remain there till 10 or 11 o'clock, the younger women being busy at home, cooking the meals and doing other household duties. The fishermen of Bengal are extremely conservative, and there has been no alteration in their modes of life, in spite of the great advance which Western education has made in this part of India.

As an article of food fish is both delicious and nutritive. This diet is also said to have the virtue of adding to the brain-power. It keeps up a moderate and genial heat in the system, and is easily digestible. Fish are very rare in the North West provinces, and the fish-eating Bengalis are an abomination to the people there.

XLIX. ELEPHANTS.

Elephants are an order of the pachydermata or thick-skinned animals, which includes among others the horse, the ass, the hog, the rhinoceros, and the hippopotamus. The elephant has separate toes clothed with a hoof. The most remarkable feature of the elephant is its trunk, which is nothing more than an elongated nose. With the trunk the elephant gathers food in the form of grass, herbage and branches of trees, and puts it into his mouth, and also with it, he draws up water, and pours it down his throat. Male elephants are also furnished with a pair of tusks, proceeding from the upper jaw, and on this account are often called tuskers. It is with these tusks that they gore and kill their enemies. Elephants are very fond of wallowing in the mud, with which they completely besmeer themselves. They are found only in Asia and Africa. The hugest of all animals, they have something imposing and sublime in their appearance and their movements, and they are as remarkable for their sagacity as for their strength.

In their wild state they are very sociable. They always march in large troops, the oldest being in the front, the young and sickly in the centre, and the middle-aged bringing up the rear. The elephant shows very great tenderness for its young, which is fully reciprocated. Mr. Bruce tells us of a young elephant, which, when it saw its dam fall, rushed out of the thicket in which it had taken shelter, and fell upon the hunters and their horses, only, alas, to fall a victim to its filial affec-

tion. The sagacity displayed by 'coonkies' or decoy elephants is very wonderful. During the pairing season, the bachelor elephants, called *savans*, wander about singly, uttering shrill shrieks. The decoy elephants approach the *caun*, and begin to caress him with the utmost tenderness and affection, until he becomes blind to what is going on. The *mahouts* (drivers) in the meanwhile pass a rope with dexterity round the forelegs of the infatuated lover, and he is speedily secured. When a large tree is at hand, the females artfully lead the males towards it, and the rope is then fastened to it.

Many instances of the sagacity and memory of elephants are given in books of travels in India. There was a very large elephant called *Pagal*, and an officer wanted it to carry more than its usual load. This the elephant obstinately resisted, whereupon the officer lost his temper and threw a tent pin at the elephant's head. Some days after, the elephant, meeting the officer, deliberately lifted him up into a large tamarind tree, and left him to cling to the boughs and to get down as best he could. Dr Wilson, Bishop of Calcutta, told a remarkable story illustrative of the memory and the understanding of an elephant. This animal had a disease in his eyes, and had been completely blind for some days. A doctor suggested that he would like to try on one of the eyes the effect of nitrate of silver. The elephant was made to lie down and the medicine was applied. He made a terrific roar at the acute pain which the medicine occasioned, but the eye was restored and the elephant could partially see. The doctor then expressed his willingness to operate on the other eye, and the animal, hearing the doctor's voice, lay down of himself, placed his head quietly on one side, curled up his trunk, drew in his breath and when the operation was over gave a sigh of relief. Then by motions of his trunk and other gestures he expressed his gratitude to the doctor. This is strong evidence of the elephant's possessing high intelligence as well as some share of moral emotions.

L. SOME BENGALI PROVERBS AND THEIR WISDOM.

Proverbs indicate in a brief, pithy style, the tendencies and experience of a community. Proverbs have been called "The wisdom of many and the wit of one," being as they are the clever expression by one man of that which all men have found to be true. The following Indian proverbs are chosen at random, and may serve to illustrate the usual bent of the Indian mind.

There are some men who throw away what is of real value to them, and take particular care of what is comparatively useless. Their conduct is ridiculed by the proverb—"She has thrown away gold, but has tied a knot in one end of her cloth."

This is almost tantamount to saying "Throw away the substance, but hold fast the shadow." There are again others who do not see the beam in their own eyes, but see the mote in those of their neighbours. Their conduct is ridiculed by the proverb—"The sieve says to the needle, why have you that hole in your butt end?" Family bonds become loose if the members cook their meals separately. This is expressed by the proverb—"Let your father cook his meal elsewhere; he will be to you no better than a neighbour." Sometimes a man does us an irreparable injury and then offers his services to us as if he were our best friend. The conduct of such a person is thus described:—"He has cut out the roots, but is watering the top." There is an English proverb to the effect that what is everybody's work is nobody's work. The Bengali equivalent for this runs as follows—"The mother of many brothers has no chance of being burnt on the banks of the Ganges." The English proverb "Half a loaf is better than no bread," has its Bengali equivalent in "A blind uncle is better than no uncle." When a person wants to say to another "I am worse off than you," he says "You drink your water out of the earthenware bowl, and I drink at the ghat." An idle braggart is thus spoken of—"His father wears a threadbare rag, but his words are enough to load a ship." If a son partakes of the nature of his father, we say "The son and his father, the horse and his rider, will bear at least some little resemblance to each other." When you pay your money but do not get your money's worth, you exclaim "I have paid the ferryman, but have had to swim the stream." In Bengal boys are very precocious, and men reach their fullest development prematurely; this unfortunate state of things is indicated by the proverb "When you are twenty your body loses all strength, your mind all vigour, and your heart hope or courage." Our women, too, age very early, and this is indicated by the formula—"Twenty—old age." Extravagance is thus rebuked, "To-day bread and *dal*—a porridge of pulses; to-morrow lock-jaw." When a man is placed between the two horns of a dilemma, which are equally perilous, he says "If Ram kills, I am killed, and if Ravan kills, I am killed as well." This alludes to the abduction of Sita. Marich had said within himself "If I steal Sita, Ram will kill me; if I do not steal Sita, Ravana will kill me. So any way I am sure to be killed."

LI. "BE IT NEVER SO HUMBLE THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME."

The charms of domestic happiness have always been a favourite theme of poets, who have sung of them in a fervid and glowing style. If we turn to the pages of Gray or Burns, we shall find there the simple joys of a rural household painted in the brightest

and gayest colours. How very delightful is the evening scene around a poor fireside ! The father, his day's work over, sits down at ease in the midst of his family group. His children gladden his ears with their innocent prattle, and climb his knees with eager haste, "the envied kiss to share." The wife shows a matronly care for the ease and the comfort of her beloved husband. The kindly neighbours drop in and join the family circle, helping to beguile the hours with their pleasant and cheerful conversation. What wonder that the father should forget his lowly condition and his weary cares while in the enjoyment of these pure and engrossing delights.

These homely joys may at first sight seem to be somewhat commonplace. But as we grow elder, we find that they transcend most other joys in life. These are often gifts of fickle fortune and are as variable as the wind. The pleasures of rank, wealth, fame, or power, are, as everybody knows, extremely precarious. But a kind father, an affectionate mother, a loving wife, a dutiful son, a devoted, obedient daughter are "a joy for ever." Moreover, rank, fame, wealth, and power are not accessible to all, implying, as they do, not only certain superior powers of the body and the mind, but also a favourable and fortunate combination of circumstances. Domestic delights are, on the other hand, within the reach of us all. The pleasures of a public life are of an exciting character, calculated to weary and harass the soul, while the sober and serene joys of domestic happiness have a soothing influence on the mind, tending towards peace, contentment, and cheerfulness.

But it is not for these joys alone that our homes are to be valued. Our homes are often the best schools for acquiring the noble virtues of sympathy, forbearance, and self-denial. To watch the mother, the wife, and the daughter in the daily performance of their household duties is in itself a liberal education. For who can see these noble examples of unselfish devotion without wishing to imitate them ? Self-control, the spring of nearly all the virtues, is largely a result of home influences.

Our pleasantest associations are often connected with our homes. For it was there that we, in a majority of cases, spent the happy years of our childhood and youth. Imagination loves to linger over these scenes and throws a charm of romance over them, lending a visionary glow to the attractions of the reality. Hence homes are assigned, in a Sanskrit verse, a higher place than heaven itself. "The mother and the birth-place are superior to heaven." And the English poet strikes a chord in all hearts when he sings his song,

"A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there;
Which, wherever we rove, is not met with elsewhere.
Home ! home ! sweet, sweet home !
Be it never so humble, there's no place like home."

Savages have no idea of the pleasures of home-life. In ancient times, the Greeks, the Romans, and even the early Christians attached but small importance to domestic joys. In modern times it is chiefly the Teutonic races who prefer the delights of home to all other pleasures in life. The Zenana system deprives the homes of the Hindus and the Mahomedans of their highest charm, namely, the company of women. It is among the middle and the upper classes of England that home-life has reached its ideal of perfection. . .

LII. SELF-DENIAL.

Certain desires and appetites of a somewhat ignoble type are born with us. They have for their object the gratification of self, and may pass under the common name of *forms of self-indulgence*. These appetites are known in Sanskrit as the six "enemies," and are called Lust, Anger, Avarice, Infatuation, Pride and Envy. Like the "seven deadly sins" of the Roman Catholic Church among Christians in Europe, they offer the most formidable obstacles to our moral or spiritual reform. To subdue them is our first and paramount duty. Self-denial is only another name for this imperative duty of conquering all desires for self-indulgence.

Man is a compound of two distinct natures, a higher one, by which he is united with God and angels, and a lower one, which he shares in common with the animal creation. The delights which pertain to our lower nature are all centred in self-gratification, and have something gross and earthly in them. They are very captivating in the beginning, but they end in distress and disaster. Our higher nature sets its face against such delights and enjoyments and impels us to seek goodness, piety, and holiness.

These latter are not without a pure and refined joy of their own, a joy, which, though sober and moderate, is more permanent and has a soothing and ennobling influence. The lower nature is more agreeable, while the higher nature is more beneficial. Self-indulgence encourages the pursuit of the agreeable at the expense of the beneficial. Self-denial rejects the agreeable and adheres to the beneficial.

Moral and religious teachers of all ages and of all countries have enjoined upon their followers and disciples the importance of self-denial. Christ, Buddha, Chaitanya, and Mahomet all preached and practised this all-important virtue of the abnegation of self. "Go and sell all thou hast and give to the poor," said Christ to his disciples, "and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." The religious books of the Hindus are replete with lessons to the same effect. The poet-philosopher Sankaracharya inculcates renunciation of self in various forms and with various illustrations. In his "Mohamudgar, i.e. The club for dissipating all

delusions," he writes—"Who is your wife? Who is your son? This world is a great mystery. It is a snare and a delusion. Leave it, therefore, and make haste to enter into the kingdom of heaven." Again, we read in the same book "Be not proud of your wealth, or your authority, or your youth. Time will seize them all in the twinkling of an eye." In the *Hitopadesha* there is a sublime couplet which may be thus translated—"This accursed belly, of ours may be easily filled with the herbs which grow wild and of their own accord in a forest. Who then will commit a crime for the sake of the belly?" In point of fact self-denial was carried to an absurd extreme among the Hindus, so as to give rise to lethargy, indifference, and even pessimism. This ought to be guarded against. For every virtue is a golden mean, and excess on either side is equally culpable.

In modern times self-denial is at a great discount. Enjoyment is the essential feature of modern civilisation. Hence self-denial is, in many quarters, looked upon as a sign of short-sighted folly. In the place of self-denial we now too often find an eager scramble for power and self-advancement. Instead of worshipping plain living and high thinking, we are in danger of bowing before men who have resigned all high thinking for the sake of high living. This must end in a universal catastrophe, and some who thus read the signs of the times are looking forward with dread to such a calamity.

LIII. THE POSTAL SYSTEM.

Of all the benefits that the English rule has conferred on India, the postal system yields to none in point of importance and usefulness. Formerly communication by letters was so expensive that it came to be regarded as a luxury which none but the rich could command. But now you have to spend only a pice, and you can put yourself in communication with any part of the Indian world, however distant. Formerly letters used to be carried by special messengers or couriers. This took so much time and was attended by so much trouble and inconvenience, that a letter carrying an urgent message proved all but useless when it reached its destination. But now a letter can be sent with the utmost despatch, and it fulfils the purpose it is intended to serve.

Letter-bags and parcels are now sent forward from station to station by means of various agencies. First of all, there are relays of runners who relieve one another at short intervals of three or four miles. When a land-route is traversed by a river or a channel or any other water-course, the letter-bags and the parcels are sent forward in ferry-boats especially provided for the purpose. Whenever there are railway trains or steamers along a

route, they are sure to be used by the postal authorities at least for the mail service. This has so far conquered space and time that a letter may now be carried from one extremity of India to another in the course of a few days.

The postal system is a source of large income to the Government. But the money paid by the people is but a poor return for the benefits they receive at the hands of the Postal Department. People feel this, and they cannot but bless the Government that has rendered them this great service on the receipt of such a comparatively small fee. There is probably no other department of the Government which is so largely and materially beneficial to the rulers and the ruled alike. It was said of the Raghus (the kings of Oudh), that they were like the sun. For what the sun takes from the sea in the shape of vapours, he returns to it a hundredfold in the shape of a copious downpour and other rich gifts. In the same way the taxes, which the Raghus collected from the people, were returned to them a hundredfold in the shape of gifts, presents, educational advantages, and other benefits. This simile is fully applicable to the English Government in connection with the postal department.

The postal department in India comprises various branches. First of all there is the Money-order branch. For a small commission this branch undertakes to remit large sums of money to all places with the greatest speed and security. Then there are the Registration and the Insurance departments, by which all kinds of valuables can be sent from place to place with perfect safety, the postal service holding itself responsible for loss or damage. Then there is the Savings Bank, intended to encourage frugality and a desire to save among the toilers of India. Then again, there are arrangements in every post office for facilitating the despatch of telegrams. And recently post offices have taken to selling quinine to the malaria-stricken people of Bengal.

The postal system thus enters into almost all the concerns of life. The post office is chiefly conducted by Natives of the country, and it is thus probably the cheapest of the civil departments under the Government. And be it said to the credit of the officers of this department that it is managed with the utmost success and efficiency. The public are so well served by it, that it has won their fullest confidence, and the post office is one of the most popular institutions in the country. Its sphere of work is widening every day, and whatever work it undertakes, soon strikes a deep root and begins to prosper.

LIV. MAKING THE BEST OF THINGS.

This refers to that disposition of the mind which inclines us to make the most of what we have. Most of us have the weakness to lament over the absence of what we have not. This

is a very pernicious habit. For all that we gain by it is a depression of the heart and a spirit of discontented envy. We allow our time to be spent in idle regrets and our energies to be frittered away in sobs and sighs. We seem to be weighed down by a deep and settled melancholy, and an habitual gloom makes our lives dull and dreary.

It indicates a higher and nobler frame of mind to be able to take a cheerful and hopeful view of all our belongings and surroundings. It is only a timid and cowardly spirit which gives itself up to idle murmurs and fruitless whinings. A man of a braver and stronger mind will boldly face his position in life, will cheerfully take his stand on what God has given him, and will resolve to improve his lot by his own diligence and perseverance. Southey tells us of a Spaniard who always put on spectacles when about to eat cherries in order that the fruit might look larger and more tempting. In the same way we should make the most of our enjoyments. The advantages of this disposition of mind are manifold, and some of these may be specified.

In the first place, if we are resigned to and contented with our own lot, we are saved a great deal of needless misery. It is no use crying over spilt milk. So it is no use making ourselves miserable for things over which we have hardly any control. We may not have been blessed with the memory of A, or the judgment of B, or the imagination of C. But what would be the good of getting unhappy over these natural defects and shortcomings, for which we ourselves are only partly responsible? Let us, however, never forget that, we too, have certain faculties in us, which, if properly trained or developed, will be capable of yielding the best results. Let us therefore find out which faculties we excel in, and let us devote our best energies to the development of these. A certain advance towards perfection is within the reach of us all. Let us but make this and we shall win the approbation of God both in this world and in the next.

Secondly, we are naturally very imitative. Happiness and misery, cheerfulness and gloom are all exceedingly contagious. A man of cheerful, contented spirit is not only happy in himself, he spreads an atmosphere of happiness wherever he goes. It makes one's heart glad to see and hear a man of cheerful disposition. But a man of gloom is a plague to himself and a torment to all he comes in contact with. Every sensible man ought to take pride in being a diffuser of joy rather than of gloom.

Thirdly, in our domestic sphere, we have to deal with persons of different shades of character and intelligence. Most of them will fail to reach the standard we expect or require of them. And unless we are determined to make the most of what we have, we shall be most bitterly disappointed. If we make a due allowance for the shortcomings of our kith and kin, we shall be

loved and respected by all. Otherwise, our homes will be the centres of bickerings, disputes, heart-burnings and heart-breakings.

Fourthly, none of us can be completely happy. We can never come to possess all that we wish for. And things cannot always happen in this world in accordance with our needs or desires. If, therefore, we once get into the habit of being upset by failures, our life will give us frequent occasions for unhappiness. Let us therefore bear in mind that real greatness and real happiness consist in brave and continuous struggle. Let us only work with courage and resolution. What success may reward our efforts is not the first question, but to do what we have to do thoroughly well. If we work in this spirit, we shall not only turn out very good work, but we shall put ourselves in the way of securing the possession of "a sane mind in a sane body."

LV. OBEDIENCE TO PARENTS.

To a Hindu a father is an object of reverent worship. After making his daily obeisance to the gods, a Hindu is required to invoke the blessing of his father with the words "All religion is centred in the worship of the father. To be in the company of your father is to be in heaven itself. One can dispense with the holiest forms of penance if one worships one's father. To propitiate your father is to propitiate all the gods in heaven." As for the mother, she is declared to be sweeter and holier than Paradise. All the civilised nations of the ancient times regarded filial affection as a fundamental virtue. "Honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee," is one of the Ten Commandments of God in the Old Testament. Among the Greeks and the Romans, the father had absolute authority over the son. Disobedience to parents was everywhere regarded as an atrocious and unnatural crime, and in some countries it was even considered in the light of a capital offence.

There is a proverb among us—"Affection descends from a higher plane to a lower one." This means that we are naturally prompted to love our children and that filial affection is not a natural instinct. No doubt there is some truth in this. No parents, excepting in some rare instances, are habitually unmindful of the welfare of their children. But examples of undutiful sons and daughters are but too common in this world. It must, however, be remembered that to be guided solely or chiefly by our natural impulses or instincts is a sign of savagery or barbarism. The higher we ascend in the scale of civilisation, the more marked becomes our departure from a state of nature. We then take Reason and Conscience for our guides. We seek and follow not merely what is natural but what is just,

right, and proper. Can there be anything better or more just than that we should love and honour our parents?

Our parents are our greatest benefactors. It would be superfluous to point out in detail the benefits we receive at their hands. They give us all that they have, and it is for our sake that in many cases they go on toiling like galley-slaves from year's end to year's end. The agony they endure when we are ill is indescribable. They so completely merge themselves in us that they do not seem to have a separate existence of their own. All their aims, all their hopes and all their efforts are centred in us. Would it not be the basest ingratitude on our part not to make some return for these favours and benefits? Gratitude may not be a natural instinct. But no nation that has the remotest pretensions to civilisation should omit to foster and cherish gratitude. Gratitude is the first step towards moral progress; and by constant exercise gratitude may be made to acquire the force of a natural instinct. Whoever fails to make this effort commits a sin—for ingratitude is one of the blackest crimes that we can be guilty of. There is a couplet in Sanskrit which means—"You may absolve yourself from the sin of slaying a Brahman by going on a pilgrimage to holy temples and shrines. But the sin of ingratitude can never be washed away."

There may be instances in which a father proves himself unworthy of respect or reverence. This is a great misfortune and must be endured patiently. The son should never rebel against the father. Of course, the son must never consent to do anything dishonest or dishonourable even for the sake of his father. But with this exception, let the son submit even to the caprices of the father without minding the hardships and the inconveniences which such conduct may entail upon him. Are there not millions of fathers who cheerfully submit to the whims of their sons to give them pleasure? How much more then should sons seek to give pleasure to their fathers. It is certainly not the duty of the son to sit in judgment upon the father. It is rather his duty to obey his father in all good things. Let him then perform this duty with love and tenderness, and he will win the approbation of all right-thinking men.

LVI. PUNCTUALITY.

Punctuality (from Lat. *punctum*—a point) meant originally a strict adherence to rules or forms of any kind. A man was called punctual when he obeyed to the letter the moral or religious injunctions obtaining in one's country. So in literature, a punctual man was he who obeyed the rules of grammar or rhetoric in a too servile spirit. But now the word punctual is used in a restricted sense. It now denotes that habit of the mind which binds us to a timely observance of our engagements and

appointments. We are now said to be punctual when we are always in time, when we never keep others waiting, when we are sure to be where we are wanted or expected precisely at the appointed hour.

This is not a virtue of any mean order. It implies method and self-control; virtues which are in themselves the roots or springs of most moral progress. It implies also a scrupulous regard for truth and a determination to do one's duty at all costs. The self-sacrifice it involves is sometimes great. You may be in the midst of griefs and afflictions; you may be suffering under the weight of physical and mental discomforts; but yet you will have to lay aside all personal considerations in order to be faithful to your promises and engagements. Lastly, punctuality never allows us to indulge in sloth and indolence. It generates the habits of diligence and activity so essential to success in life.

Some have an idea that punctuality is of little or no practical importance. Punctuality at the dinner-table or on the tennis-ground may be considered to be (though it is not) a very trifling matter. But the loss of an hour or of a few minutes is sometimes of sufficient importance to decide the fate of an empire. Archias of Thebes had put off business for a few hours and lost his kingdom thereby. The Countess of Nottingham neglected to send in time the ring of Essex to Queen Elizabeth and this was the reason why the Earl lost his head and the Queen broke her heart. "There is," says Shakespeare, "a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune." To "take a tide at the flood" one must be ready to the minute when the waters have reached their highest point, after which the ebb-tide begins. Want of punctuality not only leads to failure but indicates a careless, slovenly mind. A man wanting in this virtue is suspected, and sometimes justly suspected, to be of lax morals; he is also suspected to be insincere, untruthful and untrustworthy. A habit so dangerous to one's character and reputation should be overcome early by earnest and persistent endeavours.

I will now point out two more obvious advantages of punctuality. We very often complain of want of time. But we shall find time for all our work if we are only punctual. If we draw up a routine of all that we have got to do, and if we punctually perform the tasks we impose on ourselves, we shall not only have time for careful discharge of our duties, but we shall find ample leisure for the cultivation of our intellect and morals. Anthony Trollope, who was one of the most prolific writers of the age, got through his work chiefly by the aid of punctuality. In the second place punctuality is a mark of true politeness. To fail in our engagements is to show that we do not attach much importance to them. When we keep our friends waiting, we in a way slight them, saying as it were—"others may consult my ease and comfort; but I am not going to inconvenience my-

self for the sake of others." This is arrogance and egotism, for our first duty in society is to be attentive to the comforts and convenience of others, and to show a delicate regard for their feelings and sentiments. We may be innocent of all wish to give offence ; but we are judged in this world by our actions and not by our intentions. We should therefore carefully abstain from all such actions as have even the appearance of rudeness or incivility.

LVII. TRUTHFULNESS.

Truthfulness may be considered from two points of view. In the first place it requires that there must be a correspondence between our thoughts and our speech, and between our speech and our actions ; that is to say, we must speak as we think or feel, and our actions must be suited to our words. In the second place truthfulness implies that we must give an honest and faithful account of what we have seen, or said, or thought, or done. When there is a deviation or departure from truth owing to lapse of memory, or insufficient observation, or imperfect understanding, it is excusable. But if untruthfulness is due to a desire to deceive, it becomes an odious and hateful vice.

Truth alone endures ; for it alone can stand the test of time. A lie may be supported with the utmost ingenuity ; it may even deceive and delude for a time. But you may be certain it *will* be seen through sooner or later, and will be branded with the infamy it deserves. This world of God's making is based upon truth, and nothing but truth will pass current in it. Let us remember this when we are tempted to tell a lie. A lie must perish as soon as it is detected, and detected it will be, in spite of our best endeavours to give it the colour of truth. To deal in lies is as impolitic and as unprofitable as it is sinful.

Moreover, lying is very hard work. As the saying is—"He who tells one lie needs twenty others to support it." To support a falsehood requires a constant exercise of imagination, an unfailling memory and an anxious vigilance. But truth is very easy. It "sits on our lips and drops out before we are aware." If we tell the truth, we are never called upon to be on our guard. We are never harassed by the dread of detection, and we go about our work with a light, merry heart. A man must be a fool indeed who would exchange this easy and happy frame of mind for one of constant dread and anxiety.

Truthfulness is a most fundamental virtue. No society can subsist without it. What we need most urgently in our social relations is mutual confidence and trustworthiness ; and there can be no confidence where there is no truth. Truth is again the foundation of all moral virtues. Justice, courage, self-denial, self-control, and benevolence all presuppose truth. We are, perhaps, willing and ready to tolerate various other sins ; but a

liar is universally hated and despised. Most other vices may be corrected ; but a confirmed liar is past hope. His moral death is certain, for a liar is likely to be dishonest and insincere even in his attempts at moral reform. Untruthfulness is, therefore, rightly considered to be an infallible mark of cowardice and treachery. All great men and all great nations have been remarkable for their rigid adherence to truth. Those of the Western nations who have cherished and fostered this virtue have now become the rulers and the teachers of the world ; while those who have been less scrupulous in regard to truthfulness have lost ground day by day, until at last they have come to occupy very insignificant positions among the more prosperous nations of the world. Orientals and Asiatics, in these days, are too often unmindful of this noble and fundamental virtue ; and most of their miseries are due to this cause. Formerly, in India, at any rate, truth was a paramount virtue. Dasaratha, the king of Oudh, sent his son into exile to save himself from the odium of a lie. Ramchandra had to banish his wife and brother for the same reason. Judhistir, the renowned chief of the Pandavas, had told a lie to compass the death of the tried warrior Drona. He was compelled to descend into hell to expiate this sin. Our countrymen unfortunately hardly live up to the high and noble ideal of their ancestors. Instead, therefore, of quarrelling with those who would endeavour to help us to free ourselves from this evil habit, by pointing out wherein we differ from our great men of old, we should rather fix our eyes on our national heroes and do our utmost to wipe out this blot on our national character. We must never forget that all greatness, individual or national, must spring from the virtue of truthfulness.

LVIII. FRIENDSHIP.

Friendship is the attachment between persons unrelated by any ties of blood. Such an attachment has a charm of its own scarcely to be met with in the family group. Goldsmith describes it as the "assuager of pain" and "the sweetener of life." Addison says, "Our friends share our joys and griefs, augmenting the one and diminishing the other." There is a well-known couplet in Sanskrit which tells us—"Life is like a poison-tree. It bears, however, two fruits as savoury and as delicious as nectar. One of these is the charm of poetry, and the other the delight of friendship."

There is probably some truth in the complaint that modern civilisation is not quite favourable to the growth of deep or lasting friendships. Instances of sincere, devoted, life-long, friendships are certainly rarer now than in the past. In those days men were more generous and unselfish, and hence they could make greater personal sacrifices for their friends than we

are inclined to do now. When we speak of friendship, we are reminded of Pelopidas and Epaminondas, Harmodius and Aristogeiton, David and Jonathan, Damon and Pythias, Nisus and Euryalus, who felt and fought for each other, ready, if need were, to lay down their lives for each other's sake. In modern times, men are too seldom willing to forgo their own interests, and hence there is a notion that it is unreasonable to expect help or sympathy from our friends. Friendships are, therefore, apt to be, with some honourable exceptions, hollow and lip-deep in these days.

Friendship is, however, a natural instinct, as strong and irresistible as married love, maternal tenderness, or parental affection. There is something like a secret affinity between soul and soul, and where this affinity exists, men and women will be drawn together, and then forgetting all considerations of self, they will each live more for the other than for himself. Friendships will also spring from mutual esteem, long familiar intercourse, and a similitude of minds, studies, tastes and pursuits. When friendships are once formed, they will run their course in spite of all that prudence or self-interest may say to the contrary. There are some men so intensely selfish that they cannot feel any love or attachment for anybody. To these friendship, like love or affection, will appear as a dream, a vision, or an unreality. But to those who have a larger and a kindlier heart, friendship will appear a holy and a natural impulse.

To gain or secure friends is a comparatively easy affair, for in this we are largely aided by the natural bent of our minds. But it is very difficult to maintain and continue the friendships that have already been contracted. If we wish to do this, we must keep our tempers under perfect control, must practise patience and forbearance, and must always be ready to forgive and forget. And when there is a quarrel or a misunderstanding, we must meet our friends half way with proposals for reconciliation. Those who have once tasted the sweets of friendship will not consider this self-restraint to be too heavy a price. Friendship is, in fact, an invaluable blessing, and he who does not appreciate its worth betrays folly and ignorance, if not also a blackness of heart.

LIX. DEATH.

Death is even a greater mystery than life. That all our activities, bodily or mental, should cease, sometimes at a moment's notice; that all our feelings and emotions, all our wishes and hopes, all our efforts and endeavours, should melt away and vanish into nothing; that we should be no better than mere stocks or stones, is really a wonder of wonders. To-day we see a Cæsar lording it over the whole world, at the head of a mighty empire; to-morrow he is no better than a mere handful of dust,

barely sufficient "to stop a beer-barrel." Here is, as Shakespeare says, "a fine revolution," and one's heart "must ache to think of it."

Yet death is a law of nature, and is the necessary and inevitable sequence of life. From the microscopic atom that dances like a mote upon the sunbeam, to this vast boundless solar system itself, every object must come under the process of dissolution or death. A law which is so universal and so necessary, cannot be an evil. There is a legend that when the old phoenix burns itself to death, a young one rises from its ashes, more vigorous, more beautiful, and worthier in every sense than the parent bird whose place it takes. So when an individual, or a race, or a nation, or a world dies, there may rise on their ruins worthier individuals and nobler orders of existence. Death is thus the means of leading to higher and higher perfection. The death of individuals is a necessary step towards attaining a higher and nobler life for the race.

A most wonderful phenomenon in life is men's forgetfulness of death. As the Indian sage said, "Day by day do mortals pass into the abode of Pluto. Yet the survivors hope to attain immortality; can anything be more curious than this?" When we see others die, we seldom feel that it will probably be our turn soon to be added to the long list. From this forgetfulness alone springs much of the cruelty, injustice, and meanness of life. He who has his eye fixed on death; he who never forgets that he is merely a sojourner here below; he who knows that "paths of glory lead but to the grave," can never allow himself to be brutalised by mean joys or by a cruel exercise of power or authority. As Addison says, "This single consideration should be sufficient to extinguish the bitterness of hatred, the thirst of avarice, and the cruelty of ambition."

Death must also be considered as a summons to the august presence of God. There we are to stand our trial at the hands of that omniscient God who is also the searcher of all hearts. Nothing is hidden from his sight and he will weigh impartially, in a just and equitable balance, not only all our actions, but also all our intentions, good or bad. Let us then, while we have yet time, prepare ourselves for that day of judgment. Let us never lose sight of the one thing needful; for nothing will stand us in good stead on that day, excepting goodness and piety. As the Sanskrit poet puts it:—"All things will perish with the body. Our virtue is the only friend who will not part company with us even in death." We should, therefore, turn our minds away from pursuits of worldly ambition. We should rather make it our constant aim to attain salvation. For who but a fool will cling to the shadow in preference to the substance?

LX. A TASTE FOR READING.

Books are our best treasures. "Wisdom is more precious than rubies, and the gain thereof better than fine gold." Wealth can give us comforts and luxuries; but it can never give us that happiness of the mind in which real joy consists. Moreover, wealth changes hands; yesterday it was his; to-day it is mine; and to-morrow it will be another's. But learning is not subject to changes of fortune. It always remains with us. Then again wealth is never exempt from cares and anxieties. The acquisition and preservation of wealth are alike difficult, and both require constant vigilance. If we slacken our energies in the slightest measure, wealth is apt to slip away from our hands quite imperceptibly. The rich, therefore, can seldom enjoy perfect restfulness of mind. But it is not so with learning, its best gifts being peace and tranquility. Moreover, it is occasionally found that wealth exercises a baneful influence upon character. It begets pride, sloth, and sensuality. But learning ennobles a man's life. It shows him examples of magnanimity, and imperceptibly draws him on to high and lofty ideals of life. Lastly, learning enables us to look into and to appreciate the mysteries and wonders of nature, which even a mine of wealth will not enable us to do.

Books are not only our best treasures, they are also our best friends. Other friends often intrude upon us with their unwelcome presence, or we are not able to avail ourselves of their help, even when we stand in utmost need of it. Sometimes they show no appreciation of the fitness of things; they smile when we weep, and they are gloomy when we are in a merry humour. And some of them are untrustworthy, being actuated by selfish and dishonest motives. But books well chosen are quite free from these drawbacks. They are ever ready at our call, and we are quite at liberty to dismiss them whenever we are tired of them. In our prosperity they restrain us from undue elation; and in adversity they bring us solace and comfort. They teach us our duties and responsibilities; they point out to us the easiest and readiest methods of performing our duties; they even impel and gently persuade us to do what is essential for our temporal and spiritual benefit. They put us into communication with the wisest and noblest spirits of the past.

A taste for reading has therefore immense advantages, and it should be cultivated with the utmost assiduity. The best time for acquiring this taste is, of course, youth. "As the twig is bent," says Pope, "so the tree is inclined." Whatever habits are formed in youth will remain with us through life. Every young man, therefore, ought to make it his duty to conceive a liking for books. Learning has many material advantages, but it is not these that should influence the young. While young, we

ought to love books for their own sake, and unless all ulterior motives and considerations are kept in the background, the purer and holier influence of books will not come into active play. We can have no real taste for a thing unless we can love it for its own sake.

Like all other tastes, a taste for reading is apt to be vitiated. When this happens, it becomes a curse rather than a blessing. Two things have to be carefully guarded against in this connection. In the first place we must not allow books to monopolise all our attention. The confirmed bookworm, who has been aptly described as a "bookful blockhead," is apt to become a *pundit-mushka*, a solemn fool whose studies often stand in the way of his duties. Books, it must be remembered, ought to be a help and not a hindrance, in our journey through life. In the next place, we ought to be very careful in the choice of our books. We ought to read such books only as will make us better, wiser, and happier. Many a young man in this country wastes time and energy in a perusal of worthless trash, such as the sensational novels of Reynolds, which are not only written in a bad literary style, but present quite a false view of life. A bad book is like a moral poison, which courses through the veins and corrupts the very source of the moral life.

LXI. WHERE THERE IS A WILL THERE IS A WAY.

This means that success will be ours, if we strive for it with courage and resolution. "Will" implies here not merely an idle wish, but an iron determination. If we are determined to gain a certain end, and if we pursue it with patience and perseverance, it is extremely likely that our efforts will, in the long run, be crowned with success. There is a Chinese proverb which says :—"Under the whole heaven there is nothing difficult ; it is only that men's minds are not determined." Among ourselves there is an aphorism of much the same import—"As our thoughts are, so will our success be." And it is an everyday experience that perseverance overcomes all obstacles and ensures success.

Some hold that this is not universally true. They cite instances in which failure results from certain natural deficiencies rather than from a want of determination or perseverance. There are, no doubt, many cases of lifelong labour rewarded with scant success. But even in such cases failure is often to be attributed to a want of systematic effort and of adequate preparation, often to misjudgment. The proverb says "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Of course it would be madness to expect that we should, with two or three years' labour, perform a task which requires many years of silent preparation. Where this previous preparation has been wanting, success will not follow immediately. Then again, there are degrees and kinds of success.

The success which a genius achieves is not within the reach of us all. No determination, no perseverance, no diligent endeavour will raise an ordinary man up to the level of a Shakespeare or a Kalidās. Then again the degree of success which a Dickens or a Walter Scott achieves is also unattainable to many. But some degree of success is within the reach of all, provided they struggle for it with an earnest and single-minded devotion. Natural defects, if any, are capable of being largely neutralised by assiduous application. "As Shakespeare says :—

But screw your courage to the sticking place
And we'll not fail.

It will be easy to multiply instances of determination leading to magnificent success. Hannibal, as is well known, led his army over the Alps into Italy. His progress was impeded by the Gaulish mercenaries in the rear, and by Roman levies on each side. And yet he succeeded in conducting his army into the very heart of Italy, in spite of the endless natural and artificial barriers. The retreat of the Ten Thousand was a no less remarkable incident, which would have been impossible but for the patient perseverance of Xenophon. Demosthenes, as is known, surmounted almost insuperable difficulties by constant and assiduous effort. When young, he stammered in his speech so much as to have earned the name of the "stutterer"; this defect he overcame by putting pebbles into his mouth whenever he had occasion to speak. He was asthmatical; but he cured this infirmity by reciting poetry while running uphill. His voice was very weak and squeaking; but he remedied this by declaiming daily on the shore of a roaring sea. His gestures were very uncouth and awkward; and he acquired graceful action by speaking in the midst of swords and lances hanging from his roof. Thus by diligent and almost incredible efforts he became the greatest orator of Greece.

It is only bad workmen who find fault with their tools. So it is only the indolent who plead the excuse of the insufficiency of their natural abilities and aptitudes. They only *pretend* to wish for success; they play with their tasks; and they deceive themselves and others by merely keeping up an appearance of effort and diligence; they are wanting in energy and enthusiasm, and hence they fail.

The fruits of perseverance may be traced even among the lower animals. The bee collects a very little honey from a single flower; but yet what a large honeycomb comes into existence through the joint perseverance of these tiny beings.

Let us also bear in mind that God will help us if we help ourselves. God will surely send us that amount of success which is best for us if we ardently and sincerely wish for it, and if we are ready to make all the sacrifices necessary to attain it.

LXII. THE INFLUENCE OF GOOD EXAMPLES.

We are all familiar with the proverb "Example is better than precept." A precept speaks to the ear and leaves but a feeble impression on the mind. What we merely hear is only partly believed in. Doubts and suspicions cross the mind till we see the precept followed by a living example. An example appeals to the eye, and "seeing is believing." What we see with our own eyes goes home to our minds and is deeply engraven on our memory. As Tennyson puts it, "Things seen are mightier than things heard."

Moreover, example proves that a man believes in his own precepts. How idly on the ear fall the words of a preacher of temperance if it is known that he is himself a drunkard. It is much easier to get up a subscription for an object, if the promoters, before their appeal, have put their own names down for a good sum.

Christ one day washed the feet of His disciples. And He said to them, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." Christ was thus not merely a moral teacher who contents himself with saying, "Do as I say." He practised what He taught. His simplicity, His love, His holiness, and His devotion, were all mirrored in His life, and hence His influence over His disciples was boundless. Chaitanya, the Saint of Nuddea, used to say, "I will practise devotion myself with a view to teach devotion to others." And his example was imitated by hundreds and thousands of men in his life-time. Krishna, in the Gita, lays down the maxim "As the great men in this world behave, so will the rest behave."

We are naturally imitative. The good or evil we see enacted before us draws us imperceptibly on, till we assimilate into our nature what we behold. It is a fact of everyday experience that a good father and a good mother are almost invariably blessed with good and well-behaved children. Wicked parents, on the contrary, are cursed with naughty children. A father may be very wise and very learned, but his sons and daughters will surely go wrong unless he sets them an example of goodness and piety. So also in a nation. If there be ten good men in a nation, it may be saved from corruption and immorality. There may be hundreds of acute philosophers in a nation without its being any the better on that account. Christ called His disciples "the salt of the earth." They were strictly enjoined to practise good works in order that their example might reform the world and might draw men away from the paths of sin and self-indulgence. Thus it is seen that a family, a nation, and the world at large are saved by good examples. Even the records of noble lives exercise a most beneficial influence on our moral

culture. The ethical systems of Plato and Aristotle have almost been fruitless in their endeavours to improve our morality. But Plutarch's Lives, a record of the noblest forms of heroism and self-denial, have produced heroes and patriots through countless generations. Nothing can be truer than what Longfellow wrote in his Psalm of Life—

Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

LXIII. INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE ON CHARACTER.

It is a well-known fact that men, living in different climates exhibit different traits of character. In a hot climate, for instance, men and women are exceedingly impressionable. Their passions are easily roused and easily allayed. They will love you one moment and hate you the next, with equal violence. Their feelings are apt to run into wild extremes. As the poet has said, they are the children of the sun, whose blood is fire. They become ardent lovers when hardly out of their teens; and love assumes in them a most romantic form. And their anger is as frantic as their love. Among them friendships of a long standing are dissolved at a moment's notice through petty and slight differences. A brother has been known to stab a brother on but slight provocation. It may be easily imagined that where such ungovernable passions prevail, moral restraint becomes exceedingly difficult. Hence morality is decidedly at a low ebb among the nations of tropical countries. There may be among them occasional fits of nobility and of generosity; but that steady obedience to one's conscience or sense of duty, which alone indicates a high moral tone, is generally wanting among these people.

In a very cold climate on the other hand men's faculties and feelings are generally in a torpid and benumbed condition. A marked apathy or indifference may thus be traced in all their relations of life. They seldom feel very great warmth of love or friendship. Hatred or antipathy rarely assumes among them a violent or extreme form. Their wishes and aspirations are centred in themselves, and duty and conscience seem almost unknown to them.

In a temperate climate men are neither too passionate nor too phlegmatic. All their emotions are tempered by moderation and judgment. Their love is deep but not fervid or boisterous; their courage is strong but not impetuous; in their manners, they are polite but not over-demonstrative. In one word, they exercise a wise restraint over all their actions and feelings, and hence their lives are regulated by a strict and austere code of morality.

In a hot climate nature arrays herself in a robe of wild sublimity. Here we meet with dense masses of dark clouds, lurid

flashes of lightning cutting across the sky, deafening peals of thunder, lofty mountain ranges and mighty rivers. These scenes are very favourable to the growth of a strong poetic imagination. In a temperate climate nature assumes a milder aspect. Hence imagination there is less stimulated, and men become somewhat prosaic and matter-of-fact. They adore reason, and are very partial to weighty moral sentiments. Beauty of form seems to have less charm for them. Nature is gloomy and forbidding in a cold climate. Hence men there become gloomy and taciturn, caring neither for beauty of form nor for wealth of ideas. In a hot climate, the immensity of nature has also the effect of generating a religious frame of mind; there imagination takes immense flights and rises to the feet of God. In a temperate climate man has more faith in himself, and the result is scepticism and unbelief. Poetry and fine arts flourish best in a hot climate, while science finds its greatest development in a temperate climate. In a climate of extreme cold man rises but little above the intellectual level of brute-beasts, and there is a low level of culture, religious or scientific.

In a hot climate exertion is almost superfluous, for the heat of itself helps to sustain life. Hence men become lazy and inert. Heat has also the effect of relaxing the whole system, killing energy and vigour. In a very cold climate man is too feeble and too powerless to cope with the malevolent forces of nature. Hence there is in cold countries, a sad and overpowering feeling of despair and depression. Man does not care to exert himself there, for exertion is fruitless. In a temperate climate man can easily establish mastery over nature, and this fills him with hope and courage. In a hot climate civilisation commences early because of the natural advantages which abound there. But here civilisation soon reaches a standard beyond which it cannot advance. Civilisation commences later in a temperate climate, but it is very progressive, and new advances are every-day made in the regions of Literature, Philosophy, and Science. It will not be too much to say that the light of civilisation never shines bright in a cold climate. Politically, the hot climate is generally under despot who is servilely obeyed by all. The temperate climate is the cradle of democracy and of the constitutional form of government. In a climate of Arctic rigour there is no government to speak of. Everybody is his own master. The first stages of a civil society are still far off from the torpid residents.

LXIV. CASTES :

MAIN OUTLINE AND THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE INSTITUTION.

The Hindus have from times immemorial been divided into four castes. In the Vedic account of the creation of this universe,

we read that the Brahmans or the priestly caste sprang from the mouth of the creator ; the Khetrias or the warrior caste from his arms ; the Vaishyas or the merchants and the artisans from his thighs ; and the Sudras or the servile caste from his feet. Modern scholars have regarded this account as a purely mythical one, and have regarded the Vedic hymn in which it occurs as a recent and unwarrantable interpellation. However this may be, there occurs no period of Hindu history when we do not find Caste a recognised and revered institution of the country. It may be traced to the Vedic, if not also to the ante-Vedic period. We find mention of it even in that remote period when the Hindus and the Pasis lived together in their common home in Central Asia.

The duties and the responsibilities of each caste are laid down in the Shastras with a minute exactness of detail. The Brahmans have three imperative duties,—(1) worshipping the gods, (2) reading the Vedas, and (3) presenting alms and gifts to others. In order to earn a livelihood, the Brahmans are permitted (1) to teach the Vedas, (2) to assist others in worshipping the gods, and (3) to receive gifts and presents from others. Brahmans are forbidden to pursue any other avocations. A Khetria and a Baishya are also required to worship the gods, to read the Vedas, and to present alms and gifts, as the main ends of their lives. The Khetryas are permitted to earn their livelihood by the practice of arms, and the Baishyas by commerce, agriculture and herdsmanhip. Neither of these are allowed to usurp the professions of the other. A Sudra has only one duty, and he is to seek maintenance from the performance of that duty alone. A Sudra must serve the three higher castes.

Most writers on Indian matters represent Caste as a mark of utter barbarism. All the evils and misfortunes that have befallen India have been attributed to this institution. Although Caste is nothing but a social arrangement, even military disasters have been ascribed to it. There have again been some few who have gone to the opposite extreme. According to them Caste is a glorious institution. "I consider," says Mr Dubois, "the institution of Caste as the happiest effort of Hindu legislation." Caste has indeed many advantages. One of its most essential features is the division of labour, the economic advantages of which are so manifest and so undoubted. In the second place, Caste provides employment for all. Even now, there are no crowds of unemployed men in India, to threaten the peace and the prosperity of the community. Thirdly, Caste sets up different ideals, causing the Brahmans to seek culture ; the Khetryas military success ; the Vaishyas wealth ; and the Sudras humility and submission. The caste system has however one great drawback. It interferes too much with individual liberty of action, and tends to reduce all the members of a community to one dead level of intellectual and moral advancement.

Nowadays Caste imposes no restraints upon the choice of a profession. And its influence is limited mainly to certain regulations concerning food and inter-marriage. Men are not allowed to marry outside their caste, and they are not allowed to partake of food cooked by anybody not belonging to their own caste. These are, however, purely social restrictions and may exist side by side with the highest standards of political and moral progress. At any rate, they are too innocent to call for any sweeping or rigid measures of reform.

LXV. CHARITY.

In ordinary conversation the word charity is loosely applied to a variety of moral virtues. Sometimes we hear it used in the sense of almsgiving. Sometimes it stands for that disposition of the mind which inclines us to put the most favourable construction upon other men's doings and thoughts. Sometimes it means a feeling of kind compassion for the poor and the afflicted. Or, again, love, toleration, and forgiveness, are all used as synonyms for charity. Charity must be something wide and comprehensive to embrace all these species of moral worth.

The best definition of charity appeared in an English Magazine some years ago. "Charity," it said, "is universal brotherhood and universal sisterhood under the universal fatherhood of God." When we feel that we are all sons or daughters of the same God, and when we treat all men as our brothers and all women as our sisters, we may be said to be endowed with charity. And if our minds are saturated with a feeling of universal love and sympathy, certain noble virtues, such as we have mentioned, will naturally spring up in us. Charity is thus a frame or attitude of mind giving rise to certain lofty virtues all having for their keynote—"Peace on earth and goodwill to man."

We will now cite one or two examples from history to set forth clearly the meaning and scope of charity. One day, certain Jews wanted to stone an adulteress to death. But Christ said to them :—"He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her." This kind and forgiving attitude towards a sinner is one of the highest manifestations of charity. Then again, when Christ was nailed on the cross at Calvary, he exclaimed, "Father, forgive them ; they know not what they do." This generous forbearance towards enemies was also a noble form of charity. Nityananda was struck on the head with the edge of a broken pitcher by Jagai and Madhai, the two drunken reprobates of Nadya. The wound bled copiously ; but Nityananda embraced the rogues and made them his favourite disciples. Sir P. Sidney, while in an agony of thirst, gave away his glass of water to be drunk by the private soldier who was looking wistfully at it. Howard, Clarkson, Wilberforce, Lala Babu, Pandit Iswar Chandra,

Vidyasagar, Maharani Swarnamayi of Kassimbazar and Maharani Saratsundari of Putya were all bright and memorable examples of practical and large-hearted charity.

It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that charity must always involve a heroic self-sacrifice ; or that it needs a millionaire to exercise charity. Charity finds a scope and a field for all classes of men and in all situations of life. When a man's heart melts with pity at the suffering of another ; when he endeavours to relieve the want and distress of his fellow-men ; when he lays aside his own interests to promote the welfare and happiness of others—then he may be said to be performing the highest and noblest functions of charity. There is one department of charity which is within the reach of us all, the very humblest of us : we may think well of others. If we could but judge others with sympathy and forbearance, many of the grounds of unhappiness would be removed from this world. Let us then turn over a new leaf and adopt for our motto in life—"On earth peace and goodwill towards men."

LXVI. NEWSPAPERS.

Originally newspapers were Government publications intended to convey to the people the wishes and the intentions of their rulers. They allayed fears and suspicions among the subjects, reconciled them to changes of policy and administration, and established a friendly feeling between the rulers and the ruled. Venice was the first city which started a newspaper ; and its usefulness soon made it a favourite institution in all the courts of Europe. It was Queen Elizabeth and her first minister, Lord Burleigh, at the time of the Spanish Armada, who first issued newspapers in England. The first newspaper in India was the *India Gazette*, a Government organ, which saw the light as early as 1744.

As matters now stand, many very important functions have to be performed by newspapers. To serve as interpreter between the rulers and the ruled, is but a minor part of their duties. They have now assumed the rôle of teacher in all the important concerns of life—political, moral, literary, social, or religious. They form our opinions, and teach us the expressions in which they may best be clothed. The best thinkers of the day are now enlisted in the staff of a newspaper, and they naturally carry the public with them. The power which the newspaper now wields over the thoughts and actions of its readers is immense. Governments are made and unmade at its bidding ; new systems of philosophy are brought into fashion through its instrumentality ; the standards of literary excellence vary in accordance with its judgment ; in short, every concern of life is shaped and moulded by its utterances. The main object of a newspaper, the circulation

of news, is now accomplished almost to perfection. The London *Times* keeps its agents in almost every part of the globe, and you have only to glance over its contents to become aware of all that is taking place in even the most distant corners of the earth. Be it Europe, Africa, Asia, America, or Australia, every country is made to tell you its tale regarding its principal actions, thoughts, and utterances.

Newspapers in India have to perform a very difficult and delicate task. They are mediators and interpreters between the British Government and their Indian subjects. Indians can have few direct relations with their alien rulers; and the English too, from the nature of the case, must be more or less ignorant of the wishes and the wants of their subjects. It is the newspaper which can make the rulers and the ruled meet, as it were, on a common platform, exchanging thoughts and sentiments for their mutual benefit. A newspaper may indeed if it chooses, create confidence and goodwill between the rulers and the ruled in India; or it may set them at variance, creating discontent in the one and distrust in the other. A journal of the former class has surely chosen the better part and is justified in calling itself a *Patriot*, a true friend of its country, rather than one which attributes bad motives to the officers of Government, and by exaggeration makes the worst of any indiscretion or mistake which a European may happen to commit. India's welfare is irrevocably bound up with that of England, and nothing can be more foolish or more short-sighted than an attempt to foster ill-feeling between the two countries. The late Krista Das Pal was a plain, outspoken man, and he was at heart the most genuine patriot our country or nation has ever seen. He conducted his paper with so much candour and moderation that he drew together England and India in a strong bond of mutual esteem and goodwill. And his example was one which we should do well to lay to heart and to imitate.

LXVII. POLITENESS.

Johnson defined politeness as the "never giving any preference to oneself." A polite man will honour everybody he meets irrespectively of their rank or station in life. It is very easy to be respectful towards those who are our betters in wealth, or learning, rank, or fame. But true politeness consists in a nobility of the soul which delights in honouring those who cannot expect to elicit our respect by their social, intellectual, or moral status. Chaitanya said:—"We must not honour ourselves; but we must honour all else." Christ washed the feet of his disciples and Krishna washed the feet of the Brahman guests (mostly beggars) assembled at the Rajsuya sacrifice of King Yudhistir. Politeness never enters into discussions as to who is worthy and who is

not. It assumes an attitude of respectful humility towards all, rich and poor, great and small, high and low.

True politeness is the outward symbol of inward goodness. It springs from a real kindliness of heart, a broad and catholic spirit of charity, and a nice and scrupulous consideration for the feelings and wishes of others. So Tennyson writes :—

“For manners are not idle but the fruit
Of loyal nature and of noble mind.”

It is clear from this that a polite man must be good, kind, and considerate, and history bears witness to this. The majority of great and good men have been famous for their politeness. The Duke of Wellington, Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, Addison, and many others equally eminent, were all noted for their courtesy. The knights-errant of old, who devoted themselves to a noble ideal, redressing and repressing wrongs whenever and wherever found, made it their first business to be polite and courteous to all. Politeness is indeed the sign that distinguishes the good man from the bad one, the man of culture from the boor, and the savage from the civilised man.

There are, however, some men to be met with whose external politeness is merely a cloak for their inward treachery and blackness of heart. They are “all things to all men,” but their only design and endeavour is to seek their own advantage. They are very dangerous and are like wolves in sheep’s clothing. Theirs is an abuse of politeness, and they are sure in the end to be found out.

There are again others, who hide their real goodness of heart under a mask of external rudeness. They would snarl at you, and behave disagreeably to you, while at the same time they will do their utmost to help and befriend you. Johnson was a man of this character. But even such men, in spite of all their sterling benevolence, are often sources of great unhappiness to others. Their kind offices would have acquired an additional value if they had been accompanied by a little more politeness. For politeness possesses an intrinsic grace and wins all hearts even when it is not accompanied by any substantial benefits or services. There are some who condemn politeness as mere hypocrisy ; but if we have no natural politeness, we should certainly assume it for the sake of other people not less than of ourselves. “Assume a virtue if you have it not,” is a very wise and useful maxim ; for, as Shakespeare, with his deep knowledge of human nature, rightly tells us, the assumption of the outward habit may in the end result in the acquisition of the virtue itself.

There are some nations who carry their outward display of politeness to an absurd and ridiculous excess. Among the Spaniards in Europe, politeness often descends to the level of a ceremonious formality irksome to all the parties concerned. In all things, there should be moderation, and to run to an extreme even in politeness is a failing rather than a recommendation.

LXVIII. FEMALE EDUCATION.

There can be no doubt that female education has now struck deep root in Indian society. Even the most rural and benighted villages now boast of girls' schools. Nearly every household, orthodox or otherwise, makes it a point to educate the girls along with the boys. The first question which the bridegroom and his party ask concerning the intended bride is:—"Has she received any education?" Education, however elementary, raises a girl in the estimation of the public, and it is a great recommendation in view of marriage. Female education bids fair to be as wide-spread in this country, in a few years to come, as it now is in Europe or America. Female education has therefore passed out of the field of discussion, and has entered into the region of practical politics.

It must be admitted, however, that female education in India has not advanced beyond a most elementary stage. Early marriage draws the girls away from their schools before they complete their eleventh or twelfth year, so that when a girl leaves school her education is comprised within the following limits:—In literature her knowledge does not go beyond *Bodhodaya* and *Kathamala*; in arithmetic she can do a few sums in addition and subtraction; she can knit woollen comforters and stockings; and she writes an almost illegible hand with innumerable blunders in spelling. There are some few (and these are generally Brahmos and Native converts to Christianity) who show a great aptitude for learning, pass higher examinations, and even graduate in Arts and Medicine. There are some few who join the Campbell Medical School and qualify themselves as nurses, mid-wives, and lady doctors. The number of these educated girls is so small that they are like a drop in the ocean, but as most of these are earning their livelihood in an honourable and independent manner, it is to be hoped that their example will be imitated by an ever-increasing number.

In some instances the little learning of our girls is producing very disagreeable results. Girls that can read or write are still in a great minority as compared with their unlettered sisters; hence their attainments, however insignificant these may be, are not a little apt to be overrated. This in some cases turns the heads of the poor girls, and they consider themselves as belonging to a higher and nobler order of existence. They are thus puffed up with pride, and are unfitted to take their share in household duties. They think it beneath them to cook, to cleanse dishes and cups, to scrub the floor, or to fetch water from rivers or tanks. If married to poor people, they look upon themselves as thrown away, and have been known on slight provocation to put an end to their existence by swallowing opium, or by hanging or drowning themselves. Sometimes where they are

allowed to take the upper hand in the management of the household affairs, they grow lazy, domineering, extravagant, and selfish. They thus prove a great torment to all they come in contact with. These, however, are not lasting evils, and they will surely pass away with the spread and advance of female education itself.

In England it was Addison who created a literature for women. In Bengal it is Bankim Chandra who has formed and guided a taste for reading among Indian women. Addison, however, was a fountain of the purest morality, and where he amused, he ennobled and elevated. There are many who hold that the same cannot be said of Bankim Chandra's works. The girl of the period it is true, is wild, romantic, and sentimental, and apt to be incompetent for the serious struggles of life. But it will be very difficult to ascertain how much, if at all, Bankim Chandra is responsible for this untoward state of things.

LXIX. INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS.

In this country we have a notion that an exhibition is merely an occasion for festivities and merriment on a somewhat large scale. There are some who take a more indulgent view of an exhibition, and hold that it is a collection of curiosities in arts and industries, to afford delight to the sight-seer and the curiosity-hunter. But few believe for a moment that exhibitions can confer any practical benefits on anybody. The great Calcutta Exhibition of 1885 is often cited as a splendid show which ended in nothing. This, however, is an erroneous view, bearing witness to the unpractical side of the Indian character. The primary object of an exhibition is to give an impetus to the agriculture and manufacture of a country, or rather of the world in general. Different nations have acquired various degrees of skill and aptitude in different arts and industries; and they can hardly meet without receiving important lessons from and imparting wise instruction to one another. An Indian weaver, a Chinese carpenter, a European mechanical engineer, and an up-country carver cannot examine each other's work without being mutually benefited. Of course, the skill or the aptitude which a nation has acquired by centuries of earnest and persistent toil cannot be transmitted to another nation in the course of a few days or weeks. But knowledge is power, and no one can predict what may be the ultimate result of even a chance experience.

The tendency of past ages was to encourage secrecy. Every expert workman taught his art to his son and heir, and to no one else. Hence the knowledge of certain arts and a proficiency in them were the monopoly of certain families; beyond these such arts could never be learnt or practised.

This may have been a source of very large income to the privileged families, but it must have meant a serious loss to the world at large. For where great gain is made by the manufacturers, there must be great cost to the consumers. Secrecy and monopoly therefore are a source of great loss to mankind at large. The tendency of the present day is towards open competition, and our motto now is—a fair field and no favour. None but natural advantages, such as those of soil, climate, or superior culture, are allowed to have any weight. This is a great advantage, for it is calculated to improve the quality of the articles produced, and to reduce their price to a fair and reasonable limit.

The first international exhibition of note was held in London, under the auspices of the late Prince Consort in 1851 in the building which has since been made into the Crystal Palace. Some of the exhibits then collected have been preserved, so that the attractions of the Palace are still maintained.

The Calcutta Exhibition of 1885 has also proved a considerable boon to this country. The works of the Krishnanagore and Lucknow potters, so wonderful in their design and in their execution, were then collected, and they have since been added to the permanent stock of wonders in the Asiatic Museum. Moreover, the exhibition brought into prominent notice the several arts and products of India, which, but for it, would still have remained unnoticed and unknown. The medals awarded at the exhibition have advanced the sale of various articles, and have paved the path for further useful discoveries and inventions. And since that time various other exhibitions, agricultural and otherwise, have been held to the immense advantage of the people. It is to be hoped that our countrymen will come to realise more and more the fact that exhibitions are of great value in developing the natural resources of our country.

LXX. THE STUDY OF SCIENCE.

Sciences are of various kinds : we speak here of Natural Science. This science consists in a careful and accurate observation of nature, with a view to ascertain the laws which regulate her operations. No study can be more profitable or more pleasurable than that of the laws or phenomena of nature ; for nature teems with beauties and wonders. The plants, the animals, the rocks, the sky bespangled with stars, all reveal to us wonders, surpassing in beauty and grandeur the richest creations of human fancy or imagination. The beauties of nature are perceptible to all. Who can look upon the rose or the lily without being struck with their inexpressible beauty ? But to a man who has had a scientific training, nature will speak in a language and with an emphasis hardly conceivable to a person ignorant of science.

For instance when you know the laws under which a flower exists and grows, and when you know the meaning and the design which are manifest in every part of it, you will not only see new beauties, but you will be furnished with wonderful illustrations of the power, the wisdom, and the beneficence of God. As Sir J. Lubbock puts it—"Without botany we may admire flowers and trees, as one may admire a great man or a beautiful woman in a crowd, but it is as strangers. The botanist on the contrary when he goes out into the woods or into one of those fairy forests which we call fields, finds himself welcomed by a glad company of *friends*, every one of which has something interesting to tell."

But it is not only for the beauties and charms of nature that the study of science is to be recommended. Science as a branch of study has a very great influence on the growth and development of our intellectual and moral faculties. Science quickens and cultivates the faculty of observation, which without it, might lie almost dormant through life. Science teaches us how to trace the relationship between objects apparently diverse, and to classify them under a few prominent heads. Science accustoms us to trace the sequence of cause and effect. It feeds and elevates the imagination. And lastly, it teaches us to make independent and original researches on our own account. Morally, science brings us face to face with the immensity and sublimity of nature, and thus instils into us the ennobling virtue of humility. Science makes us patient in our inquiries, and diffident of our own judgment. It teaches us to love and reverence truth for its own sake. In one word, self-reverence, self-knowledge, and self-control are three great blessings of science.

Considered from another point of view, science is a great angel of mercy devoted to the service of man. "She has laboured," says Farrar, "to extend human happiness, to economise human effort, and to extinguish human pain." The easy and rapid communication which science has established through various parts of the world, has enabled us to gather the treasures of the earth at a comparatively cheap cost. Medical science especially has made wonderful progress. She has restored eyes to the blind and hearing to the deaf. She has lengthened life, minimised danger, controlled madness, and trampled on disease.

LXXI. EDUCATION.

The standards of education have varied at different times in different countries. Formerly, in England, education implied nothing more than a knowledge of Greek and Latin. In India an educated man meant only one well read in Sanskrit. If a man could compose a verse in Sanskrit, he was supposed to have

reached the high-water mark of education. But all this has undergone a change. Now education means a knowledge of many things. According to Lord Brougham, education means "to know something of everything and everything of something." So that a really well-educated man should have at least some elementary knowledge of the various branches of learning, such as chemistry, physics, physiology, zoology, philosophy, metaphysics, and many other things. He is also supposed to have a deeper acquaintance with some special subjects to be chosen by himself. An educated man is therefore required to be a "generalist" as well as a "specialist."

Education is so comprehensive, because its main object is harmonious development of all our intellectual and moral faculties. Education is therefore the expansion of the mind to its fullest extent. God has given us certain faculties. It is education which develops and perfects these faculties, so that they may yield the results God designed for them. Education, strictly speaking, will therefore consist, not merely in reading books, but in personal thinking, feeling, and acting, and in a persistent and conscious effort to improve our minds and morals. Books must be read: but they must also be properly digested and assimilated, for our object is not so much to amass a store of knowledge as to strengthen our intellectual and moral faculties by affording them sufficient opportunities for exercise. There is no better way of developing a faculty than by exercising it.

The benefits of education are sufficiently manifest. It refines the tastes, subdues the passions and kills the baser propensities of the mind. It makes men humble and modest. It lifts them up beyond the petty cares and anxieties of life. Education strengthens the desire for truth, and truth leads to goodness. An uneducated man is too much at the mercy of random desires and chance impulses; but reason should reign supreme in the mind of an educated man, that his conduct may be regulated by a wise discrimination of good and evil.

Again, education is found to possess one great advantage from a practical point of view. It prepares us for the battle of life, and equips us with those arms which are necessary for success. Education quickens the intellect, gives us method, and fortifies the mind with patience and perseverance. It enables us to understand men and their motives, so that we can establish our authority over them, and guide them along the path of progress and civilisation. It is also one of the blessings of true education that it kills narrow prejudices and base or selfish instincts. In short, education marks off the savage from the civilised man; without education neither individual nor national progress is possible.

LXXII. THE VALUE OF TIME.

"Time," says the proverb, "is money." This means that every moment well-spent may put some money into our pockets. If our time is usefully employed, it will either turn out some useful and important piece of work which will fetch its price in the market, or it will add to our experience and increase our capacities, so as to enable us to earn money when the proper opportunity comes. There can thus be no doubt that time is convertible into money. Let those who think nothing of wasting time, remember this; let them remember that an hour mis-spent is equivalent to the loss of a bank-note; and that an hour utilised is tantamount to so much silver or gold; and then they will probably think twice before they give their consent to the loss of any part of their time.

Moreover our life is nothing more than our time. To kill time is therefore a form of suicide. We are shocked when we think of death, and we spare no pains, no trouble, and no expense to preserve life. But we are too often indifferent to the loss of an hour or of a day, forgetting that our life is the sum total of the days and of the hours we live. A day or an hour wasted is therefore so much life forfeited. Let us bear this in mind, and waste of time will appear to us in the light of a crime as culpable as suicide itself.

There is a third consideration which will also tend to warn us against loss of time. Our life is a brief span measuring some sixty or seventy years in all. But nearly one-half of this has to be spent in sleep; some years have to be spent over our meals; some over dressing and undressing; some in making journeys on land and voyages by sea; some in merry-making, either on our own account or for the sake of others; some in celebrating religious and social festivities; some in watching over the sick-beds of our nearest and dearest relatives. Now if all these years were to be deducted from the term over which our life extends, we shall find about fifteen or twenty years at our disposal for active work. Whoever remembers this can never willingly waste a single moment of his life. "It is astonishing," says Lord Chesterfield, "that any one can squander away in absolute idleness one single moment of that portion of time which is allotted to us in this world. Know the true value of time; snatch, seize, and enjoy every moment of it."

As time is precious; but the time of our childhood and of our youth is more precious than any other portion of our existence. For those are the periods when alone we can acquire knowledge and develop our faculties and capacities. If we allow these morning hours of life to slip away unutilised, we shall never be able to recoup the loss. As we grow older, our power of acquisition gets blunted, so that the art or science which is

not acquired in childhood or youth will never be acquired at all. Just as money laid out at interest doubles and trebles itself in time, so the precious hours of childhood and youth, if properly used, will yield us incalculable advantages. "Every moment you lose," says Lord Chesterfield, "is so much character and advantage lost; as on the other hand, every moment you now employ usefully is so much time wisely laid out at prodigious interest."

A proper employment of time is of great benefit to us from a moral point of view. Idleness is justly said to be the rust of the mind; and an idle brain is said to be Satan's workshop. It is mostly when you do not know what to do with yourself that you do something ill or wrong. The mind of the idler preys upon itself. As Watts has said:—

In works of labour or of skill
Let me be busy too;
For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.

LXXIII. THE USES AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF DRAWING.

Much is heard nowadays of the need of technical education in India. Without going so far as some do, who seem to think that in the teaching of practical arts alone will be found the cure for most of the deficiencies of our educational system, we still consider that the introduction of drawing as a subject in the Entrance Examination is a great step in the right direction.

Centuries ago, the Roman poet, Horace, remarked how much more rapid in finding their way to the mind were observations made by the eye than those that came through the ear, and everyone must have found for himself how much more readily he grasps a description of some object or scene if the verbal account of it be illustrated by a sketch, however slight. Who, for instance, could get any definite idea of the configuration of the different countries of the earth, of the distribution of land and water, or of the relative positions of the great cities of the world, if he merely learnt the facts as given in a text-book of geography, and were not aided through his eye by the study of maps? And how much more interesting to the young, and to their elders also in most cases, are books with illustrations than those consisting of letter-press alone. That this fact is becoming more widely recognised is shown by the increasing number of illustrated weekly periodicals: many daily journals also find room for one or more pictures of current events in every issue.

But, apart from the question of interest for the reader, drawing has a great value of its own for the student. There is no study or pursuit in which accurate observation is not a most important

factor of success. And one of the main things that drawing teaches is minute and careful observation. A student is set to draw a tree, say. To make anything like a correct picture, he must observe not only the general shape of the tree, but also the character of the branching and the arrangement of the foliage. To draw a flower he must have noted a hundred things besides its shape and colour which he probably never noted before, such as the number and arrangement of its petals, stamens, and pistils. When once a student has taught himself this habit of careful scrutiny, he will find that it stands him in good stead in most of his studies. In chemistry and physical science, for example, no progress can be made by any but the careful observer of minute facts.

Drawing is a necessary element in various industries. Before cutting the cloth for a coat, the tailor must mark its shape and dimensions on the stuff before him : the stone-cutter must trace on the block of marble the lines which his chisel has to follow : the surveyor must be able to sketch on paper the plan of the plot which he surveys. But the usefulness of drawing is not confined to these somewhat mechanical pursuits. This study has a value of its own just as mathematics have, though neither may be much practised in one's daily work in life. A habit of close observation, and of accurately recording what one has observed, is the chief lesson of the drawing-school ; it will give a thoroughness to a man's investigations in any subject, and take him a long way towards a clear comprehension of any difficulty.

LXXIV. VIRTUE IS ITS OWN REWARD.

In any pursuit which we undertake, we are all of us apt to look forward to some final reward of our exertions. The student works to pass examinations, and thereby to qualify himself for some position where he may earn a living : the merchant devotes himself to business in the hope of amassing a competence for his old age, and a provision for his family : the soldier is urged to the fight by the ambition of glory to be won, and of honours as the reward of victory. How few of the pursuits of life do we follow for their own sakes, regardless of the ulterior advantages which success brings in its train. Of which of them may it be said that it is its "own reward" ? What is meant by the saying, "Virtue is its own reward" ? It is clear that virtue does not necessarily ensure any such reward as those mentioned above, for virtue, or the resolute pursuit of what is good and avoidance of what is evil, not unfrequently brings in its train results, the very opposite of those prizes which reward the successful man of the world. Does virtue always enable a man to earn his living or gain a competence for old age ? Does it inevitably lead to fame and honours ? Certainly not. Nay, it may even alienate

some friends whose help might have given us advancement in life : it may cost us loss of fortune and of much that the world holds dear. What, then, is the nature of the reward that virtue ensures to its followers ?

The successes which we have above spoken of as the aim of most men in their various pursuits have reference to only one part of man's life. They are limited to man's position in this world with regard to his fellow-men : they are material in their nature : they make but little appeal to the higher, the spiritual part of man's being. We have each of us implanted within our hearts a feeling of admiration for what is pure and noble, a sense of gratification and an increase of self-respect when we find that we have carried this admiration into practical effect by doing what is true and right. We may endeavour to stifle that feeling : we may refuse to listen to it, and so far deaden it that it rarely makes its influence felt. But in every man's life there will be moments when conscience, as we call it, asserts itself and tells him clearly if his conduct has been in accord with the nobler or the meaner side of his nature. If he has turned his back on what is good, and has yielded to temptation to evil, his conscience tells him that he has acted unworthily. On the other hand, if he has resolutely striven to follow his nobler instincts, he will feel a sense of inward peace, a contentment of mind that is far above any gratification that accompanies success in worldly affairs. In yielding, more especially in yielding for the first time, to the lower, the sensual side of his nature, man feels a degradation : in subjugating the meaner part of himself to the nobler, hard though the struggle may be, he feels that such a victory is productive of a happiness more surely founded and more lasting than any success in worldly business could bring.

This happiness is keen enough to enable a man who has once tasted it to despise in comparison all other kinds of gratification and to relinquish them without a sigh. It is this which has prompted men and women, in all ages and in all countries, to give up all rather than disobey the dictates of their conscience, to meet death rather than dishonour. The Christian martyrs at the stake, the Hindu widow in olden days at the funeral pyre of her dear lord, thought nothing of earth and its joys, for their hearts told them that death was better than life with an unquiet conscience. And so, to-day, the statesman resigns place and power rather than pass a measure which he thinks unjust : the judge scorns the bribe that might so easily be taken : the soldier leaves home and comfort to face wounds and death for his country. And the sense of having overcome selfish desires, of having been true to their nobler instincts, brings to such followers of virtue a recompense of self-approval which far transcends the material rewards of power, or wealth, or a life of ease and comfort.

LXXV. VICE BRINGS ITS OWN PUNISHMENT.

Self-torment is the penalty which God has assigned to vice. You may be the most callous or obdurate of men, and yet you will feel a kind of slow fire burning through your veins after you have committed a crime. In ancient fables a sinner was supposed to be surrounded by terrible sights and sounds. He felt that he was lashed with a hissing serpent and a stinging scorpion. Divested of metaphor, this means that a sinner feels excruciating pangs of grief and remorse. It is for this reason that Cain said, after he had murdered Abel—"My punishment is greater than I can bear." We may take shelter under false philosophy and may seek to fortify ourselves with scepticism; but our higher nature will rise against us, and will plunge us into a sea of bitterness as a just retribution for our crimes.

Self-abasement is a necessary and inevitable consequence of wrong-doing. We feel that we have fallen, and a sense of degradation hangs as a heavy weight upon our minds, wherever we go and whatever we do. "Guilt hath no holiday," says Bacon. And Satan is made to say in Milton—"Which way I move is hell, myself am hell." A sinner hangs down his head in shame, and the sense of humiliation he feels in the company of others is to him a most painful torment.

Thirdly, vice fills us with a sense of distrust and suspicion for others. A sinner is the last person to believe in the existence of virtue and piety. We judge of others by what we see in ourselves. A liar suspects everybody of lying. To be suspicious in this way is a great misfortune for it makes all friendship impossible. A suspicious man is thrown entirely upon his own resources and is thus deprived of one of the greatest solaces and enjoyments of life.

The effects which vice produces on character are appalling. To a confirmed sinner, all noble aspirations, all unselfish devotion to others, all generosity, all nobleness of mind, appear in the light of hypocrisy. Ignoble ends, base and selfish pursuits possess his heart entirely. This weakens his efforts; for no one can work well or work earnestly until he learns to look beyond himself and his own petty losses and gains. When we think of our petty ends alone, we think more of success than of the means by which we may deserve it, and our efforts slacken.

Then there is the fear of being detected, which forms a constant thorn in the side of a sinner. All of us are naturally anxious to have the reputation of virtue; and when we have committed a crime we have a harassing dread that our reputation is in danger. Even the slightest breath of wind, or the gentlest murmur of leaves, is sometimes enough to disturb a sinner's rest at night.

Lastly, a vicious man is without the consolations of religion. For who can stand in the presence of his Maker with a guilty

conscience ! If we are not in a mood of sincere repentance for the past, we cannot hold a loving, reverent communion with God. So long therefore as vice reigns supreme in our hearts, we cannot bring ourselves into a requisite mood for devotion and worship. Cut off from man and God, the sinner has indeed a hard and miserable lot.

LXXVI. KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

By knowledge is meant a knowledge of the laws of nature as well as a knowledge of the operations of the human mind. On the one hand we must inquire into the facts of nature, and discover the laws and the causes by which the operations of nature are governed and regulated. On the other hand we must have an insight into the intellectual and moral faculties of men, and we must acquaint ourselves with the "how" and the "why" of mental phenomena. In other words, we must be well read in the physical, mental, and moral sciences. If we enter life thus equipped, we shall surely win success, we shall be loved and honoured ; and if we are so inclined, we shall be able to confer benefits upon our family, our country, and even upon the world at large.

Let us first of all examine the advantages of self-knowledge. When we have self-knowledge, we may hope to secure moral progress of the highest order. For self-knowledge will reveal to us the weaknesses and shortcomings of our nature. This knowledge will also stimulate our effort to overcome them. And knowing where the disease lies, we shall most likely be able to apply adequate remedies. We shall be under the wise guidance of our higher nature. And when we have these natural advantages on our side, we shall be able to secure a moral advance.

Let us next consider the advantages of knowledge of others. If we possess this knowledge, we can lead men as we wish. We can accurately gauge their wishes and sentiments, their habits and dispositions, their virtues and their failings ; and we can successfully appeal to those impulses of their nature, which they will be the least able to resist. Moreover, we can bring forward arguments and reasons which will satisfy and convince their reason ; we can use forms of expression which will stir their passions and emotions ; and we can hold out hopes and expectations which will lead captive their will. In the world's history the great leaders of men have been remarkable for their knowledge of human nature.

And then dominion or mastery over nature, which is now regarded as the highest achievement of civilisation, is also a result of knowledge. Many of those benefactors of our race, who have by their inventions and discoveries contributed largely to our welfare and happiness, have been men of eminent and

wonderful knowledge ; although some great inventors have had their knowledge confined to one sort of facts. Railways, telegraphs, telephones, microphones and the various machines and appliances which this auspicious century has brought into existence, have been products of knowledge.

Lastly, it is men of knowledge who are the centres of all useful ideas and opinions. It is from them that beliefs and sentiments filter down to the lowest stratum of society. And it is these beliefs and sentiments which ultimately become the springs of action. It was the Encyclopædists of France who really brought about the French Revolution, and the Edinburgh Reviewers who helped much to popularise democracy in England. In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Ulysses stands as the embodiment of knowledge, and it is shown in those immortal epics, that success was due to the efforts of the "knowing" man. In India Brahmins attained their great power through knowledge and knowledge alone.

LXXVII. RESPIRATION.

(MAINLY BASED UPON KINGSLEY'S "THE TWO BREATHS.")

Every time we breathe, we breathe two different breaths ; we take in one and we give out another. The composition of these two breaths is very different ; and so are their effects upon our system. Those who take in fresh breath, will grow up strong, ruddy, cheerful, active, clear-headed and fit for their work. Those who take in the breath which has been breathed by themselves or by any other living creature, will certainly grow up small, weak, pale, nervous, depressed, and unfit for work.

Sometimes in India men sleep covered over with a sheet from head to feet. The result is they grow pale, weak, and ill. So if we are in a crowded room with doors and windows all shut tight, we feel faint. We all breathe each other's breath over and over again, till the air has become unfit to support life. The famous Black Hole scene of Calcutta was a striking illustration of the fatal results of breathing the breath given out by ourselves or by others.

The reason why this is so, is obvious. The breath we breathe in is or ought to be pure air, composed of oxygen and nitrogen, with a minute portion of carbonic acid. The breath we give out contains among other noxious matters an excess of carbonic acid. Now oxygen purifies blood and sustains life ; but carbonic acid is destructive of life. To breathe another man's breath is to breathe carbonic acid, which cannot but put out the fire of life.

We have often heard of death by fumes of charcoal. If a man falls asleep in a room where there is a pan of charcoal burning

and no outlet for the fumes, he will never wake again. The charcoal fire, like ourselves, draws in oxygen and gives out carbonic acid. It thus consumes all the oxygen in the room, and fills it with the carbonic acid which it gives out. The human occupant of the room breathes carbonic acid gas and dies. In the same way, sleeping in a small room with lighted candles is also an injurious practice; for the candles like ourselves inhale oxygen and exhale carbonic acid.

Carbonic acid gas, when it is breathed out of our system, remains warm, and is consequently lighter than air, and rises to the ceiling. Now if it cannot escape into the air by some contrivance or other, it cools, becomes heavier, and descends to the floor. Those therefore who sleep on the floor have to breathe the carbonic acid gas as the night advances. The best way to prevent this, is to sleep on bedsteads. There ought also to be windows in the room, at least one of which should remain more or less open all night. For several persons to sleep in the same room, as is frequently done in families, is a most pernicious practice and should be abandoned.

The lungs are the organs for breathing; and they must be kept in a state of efficiency. In order to add vigour to our lungs we must walk with our chest fully expanded. To sit for hours on a chair in a cramped position is a very injurious habit; and anything which contracts the chest or prevents it from having space enough for full heaving should also be discontinued. A certain amount of speaking in a loud voice every day is a healthful practice. Children often indulge in loud noise, boisterous mirth, and fits of loud crying. These are Nature's methods for strengthening and developing the lungs. "Every shout," says Kingsley, "every burst of laughter, every song, every moderate fit of crying conduces to health by rapidly filling and emptying the lungs, and changing the blood more rapidly from black to red, that is, from death to life."

LXXVIII. HEALTH.

Bengalis, as a class, are very careless about their health. Many take no steps to preserve or improve their health until they are actually struck down by disease. They live in ill-ventilated houses, put excessive strains on their bodies or minds, take no bodily exercise, give themselves no rest or relaxation, and pursue sedentary occupations till they are literally disabled by some full disease or other. For Nature is a hard task-master; she does not allow any of her rules to be disobeyed or disregarded with impunity. The result is imperfect development, unsatisfactory work, lifelong suffering, and premature death. Prevention is better than cure. Bengalis seldom

think of prevention, and so in their case cure is often impossible ; and sometimes cure is only partial, leading only to chronic weakness and perpetual indisposition.

Health is in itself a blessing. The happiness it confers upon us is incalculable. Take, for instance, the case of a child. So long as the child is healthy, it is happy. It smiles and laughs and plays and runs about, shedding sunshine over the whole household. But when it is indisposed, it pines and cries, and even the pettiest trifles upset it altogether. When it is grown up, it unconsciously behaves exactly as it did in its infancy. So long as a young man is healthy, he will have cheerfulness ; if he fails in any of his undertakings, he will not lose hope or courage. He will laugh over his failures and will resume his work with redoubled energy. But as soon as his health is gone, he will make himself uneasy over trifles. And these experiences will be repeated in his life as long as he lives. Health requires no help from other advantages or pleasures of life to ensure happiness. But health is an essential condition of happiness, if happiness is to be derived from the pleasures or successes in life.

Education means a harmonious development of all our faculties, bodily and mental. If, therefore, a man has no health, if his body is stunted while his mind grows, his education must be regarded as imperfect and incomplete. The Greek ideal of an educated man consisted in "a full, proportionate, and harmonious educating—that is bringing out and developing—of all the faculties of body, mind and soul till a man becomes at once a reverent and a self-assured, a graceful and yet a valiant, an able and an eloquent personage." A man would, therefore, hardly be recognised by the Greeks as an educated person if he were weak and effeminate in body. That in itself is a disqualification that will place him outside the pale of "perfect" man.

Next, health has very great influence on our intellectual growth. We must have the *Corpus sanum*, if we want to have the *Mens sana*. A weak physique will beget a corresponding weakness of the brain. The effects of an active brain in a weak body have been summed up as follows :—Such a brain, says Kingsley, "may be very active, may be very quick at catching at new and grand ideas, . . . but it will be irritable, spasmodic and hysterical. It will be apt to mistake capacity for talk for capacity for action, excitement for earnestness, virulence for force, and too often cruelty for justice; it will lose manful independence, individuality and originality."

Again, health largely helps to shape our moral character. An unhealthy body often implies an unhealthy mind. The peevish and over-sensitive patient can take no just view of his surroundings, and he is led into inconsiderate and unjust conduct towards others. While more open to temptations, he has less strength with which to overcome them, and his moral standard is very apt to

sink lower and lower. Thus we should diligently seek health, not only for its own sake, but for the sake of the many intellectual and moral advantage it places within our reach.

LXXIX. COURAGE.

Courage, as is well known, may be either physical or moral. The element common in them both is a certain frame or attitude of the mind which enables us to meet dangers and difficulties, to sustain losses and hardships, without shrinking. Physical courage exhibits itself in facing bodily dangers; but moral courage may exist without any such outward exhibition. Physical courage may be inspired by unworthy or ignoble motives, such as motives of personal gain, desire for fame and even for mere notoriety. But moral courage springs only from high and pure motives. Physical courage may be an attribute of the most barbarous races utterly wanting in culture and refinement, but moral courage is a sign of higher civilisation.

An ounce of illustration is worth a pound of argument. We will therefore illustrate the nature of physical and moral courage by concrete examples. A house is set on fire, and a man rushes through the flames, regardless of all consequences, to rescue the inmates from the jaws of death; a body of soldiers plant themselves firmly in a row before the cannon's mouth and though their numbers are thinned every instant, they face certain death without shrinking; a man falls overboard and you leap into the chafing sea to rescue your comrade: these are instances of physical courage. You allow yourself to be excommunicated for some beliefs and convictions; in public life you defend the cause you feel to be right, and calmly bear the slights and sneers of your fellowmen: these are instances of moral courage. Every battlefield furnishes numerous and notable examples of physical courage. Domestic, social, and political spheres of life afford ample opportunities for the display of moral courage. When Pandit Iswa Chandra Vidyasarga risked excommunication, loss of property and even of life for the sake of widow-marriage, he showed a high standard of moral courage. And John Stuart Mill showed both sorts of courage on a memorable occasion. It was at an Election Meeting, and a large number of labourers had assembled to listen to their champion. Some of the political opponents of Mill asked him if he had not in his Political Economy called labourers liars. This was a critical moment, for the labourers, most of whom were roughs, might, if offended, have torn Mill limb from limb. Mill, though in personal danger, merely said "yes." His courage, however, raised him in the estimation of his hearers. Not only was he pardoned, but his candidature was crowned with success.

Courage is sometimes constitutional. That is, there are some

who are naturally gifted with this virtue. Dangers and difficulties never damp or depress them. They are blessed with a happy and stolid indifference to all considerations of personal danger, and they are never conscious of anything like fear. But courage with others is an acquired virtue. They are seized with fear, and depressed by a sense of their own incompetence ; but this they keep under control by a persistent and strenuous effort. It is their conscience, their sense of duty, or their desire for success, for fame or applause that enables them to overcome their fear. Whatever its source may be, courage is almost an essential condition for worldly success and for moral and intellectual progress. Success, as the proverb says, is to the bold.

LXXX. AMBITION.

Ambition is derived from two Latin words, meaning "the act of going round." Those who were candidates for office in Rome used to go about soliciting votes. Hence, ambition came to mean the desire for improving one's condition in life. It has since acquired a wider significance. It now means an eager and even an inordinate desire for preferment, rank, power, or superiority of any kind. Ambition is therefore contrasted with contentment. When we are not satisfied with our lot, and when we strive to make our lot better, we are called ambitious.

A certain amount of reproach is usually attached to the term ambition. It rather implies that our ends are not of the noblest, and that we are prepared to stoop to base means for the attainment of those ends. This, however, need not be the case. There is nothing to prevent an ambitious man from fixing his heart on the higher and nobler aims of life. There is absolutely no reason why ambition should not consist in a desire to promote the happiness and welfare of our family, of our country, and of humanity at large. And there is no reason why ambition should not strive to obtain its ends by a strictly moral and righteous line of action. There are, of course, ambitious men who pursue selfish and unworthy aims, and who are unscrupulous as to the choice of their means, but this is an abuse of ambition. We must not condemn all legitimate ambition on account of the misconduct of a few. Let us never forget that ambition is our greatest impetus for work. It stimulates our energy, and prevents us from falling into a habit of easy indolence, which is the greatest curse of life. Let us, by all means, direct our ambition along a proper and judicious course. But let us not fall into the error of supposing that absence of ambition is a philosophical or moral virtue worthy of our highest commendation. All progress, material or spiritual, individual or national, is due largely, to well-directed ambition.

Ambition is itself an index of power. When a man has not the

- power to succeed, when he is wanting in intelligence and
- strength of character, when he is a good-for-nothing drone, he feels no wish for success. But he who has natural gifts and aptitudes, he who feels within him a spark of the God-given light, must be kindled with ambition, which only means a wish and a struggle for improvement and progress. An unambitious man is usually a man of feeble intelligence and effeminate character. When such a man cries out that "the grapes are sour," let us not attend to what he says. Our life ought to be an effort and a struggle, and whoever teaches us indolence and inactivity is our worst enemy.

There is certainly a kind of lazy desire which is most aptly called Alnascar's dream. This desire is never accompanied by an earnest effort. It would be a misnomer to honour such an indolent wish with the name of ambition. There must be a *going about* in ambition, an effort, an endeavour, and a diligent and assiduous application. Wherever this is not the case, ambition degenerates into idle and unprofitable dreaming. Effort is the essence of ambition, and it is effort which alone can make us wiser, better, and happier. Let us therefore desire strongly, and make it our ambition so to act that each to-morrow may find us farther than to-day.

There are of course degrees and grades of ambition. When a man seeks self-aggrandisement in the shape of wealth, power, fame, and authority, it is the worst or lowest sort of ambition. When a man seeks self-improvement in the shape of higher knowledge or purer life, he may be said to have an ambition of a higher order. When the good of others is the predominant feature of our ambition, we occupy a very lofty platform of ambition. Our endeavour should therefore be to drown and forget self in our ambitious pursuits. Even to fail in these is better than to succeed in those ambitious pursuits where self is our idol and our centre of attraction.

LXXXI. THE STORY OF THE RAMAYANA.

King Dasaratha of Oudh had three principal wives, by whom he had four sons. Rama, the eldest, was the son of the first wife Koshalya; Bharat, who came next, was the son of the second wife Kaikeyi; Laksman and Satrugna, the youngest, were the twin sons of the youngest wife Sumitra. Laksman was devoted to Rama and Satrugna to Bharat.

- As soon as they entered upon their youth, Rama and Laksman had to go forth, under the escort of a Brahman sage, into the Dandaka forest, where they encountered and slew a huge giantess of the name of Taraka. At the close of this perilous adventure
- they went into Mithila, where King Janaka had issued a proclamation that he would give away his daughter in marriage to

any one who would draw a certain bow, the gift of the Brahman hero Parasuram. None but Rama could bend or even lift this bow. But he went further: he bent the bow with such marvellous strength that it broke, and its crash was like that of a falling mountain. As a reward for this exploit, Rama won Sita for his bride, and his three brothers were also married to three maidens of Janaka's family. Then Rama and his three brothers went back to Oudh, accompanied by their respective brides.

After a few months of gay and joyous festivities Dasaratha expressed a desire to retire from his kingly office and to appoint Rama as the regent or Vice-King. Preparations were made on a large scale for investing Rama with the insignia of royalty. That consummation was, however, frustrated by the designing intrigues of the second wife, Kaikeyi, who, having at one time sucked poison out of a wound inflicted on King Dasaratha, by a poisoned arrow, had been promised any two boons, whenever she should ask for them. At this crisis she demanded that Bharat should be made King of Oudh in preference to Rama; and by virtue of the second boon she demanded that Rama should go into exile for fourteen years.

King Dasaratha was overwhelmed with grief and rage; but Kaikeyi was inexorable. Kaikeyi explained to Rama how matters stood, and Rama, who was a loving and dutiful son, cheerfully waived his claim to the throne in favour of his brother, and gladly consented to go forth into exile. The king blessed him, and he with his wife and brother Laksman went out into the forest.

Before long Dasaratha died of a broken heart. Bharat came down to Ayudhya, and went in pursuit of Rama, whom he entreated to return to Ayudhya and to assume the kingdom. Upon Rama's refusing, Bharat returned to Ayudhya, carrying on his head Rama's golden shoes, to which he entrusted the kingdom. As for himself, he lived without the city, assuming the matted hair and the habit of a devotee.

Rama, in the meantime, had built his hermitage in the Dandaka forest, where he lived with his wife and brother Laksman in peace and contentment. One day there came to them a giantess, who, being slighted and wounded by the brothers, went to her own brother Ravana and instigated him to steal Sita by way of revenge. When Rama heard of the abduction of Sita he entered into an alliance with Sugriva, the king of the Monkeys, and sent Hanuman the monkey-God in search of Sita. Hanuman leaped over the sea and found Sita immured in an enclosed garden. When he came back to Rama, Rama with his millions of Apes marched against Ceylon, the sea-girt capital of Ravana. Here he constructed a bridge of trees and rocks across the sea and crossing to Ceylon, laid siege to it. In the fight Ravana with all his sons and grandsons were slain on the battle-field, and Sita was rescued. The whole party then triumphantly returned to Oudh,

Rama was then duly installed on the throne of his ancestors, but he found no rest. Rumours began to be circulated regarding Sita's conduct while in Ceylon, and she was condemned to exile in the forest. While in the forest she brought forth the twins Lava and Kusha. Under the fostering care of Valmiki, Lava and Kusha grew up to be strong and valiant youths. They defeated Rama and his three brothers on the memorable occasion of the horse-sacrifice. Their beauty, their sweet songs and their unrivalled prowess effected a seeming reconciliation between Rama and Sita. But when Sita was brought before Rama, he still doubted her, whereupon she called upon the Earth, her mother, to put an end to her many woes. The earth yawned and Sita leaped into the gap and disappeared for ever. Rama was very much afflicted. He abdicated in favour of his sons, and he and his brothers threw themselves into the Saraya, where they were all drowned.

LXXXII. THE STORY OF THE MAHABHARAT.

Pandu and Dhritarastra were two brothers. Once upon a time, Pandu went out into the woods with his two wives Kunti and Madri. Having been the eldest son he was, of course, the legitimate king; but on going forth into the woods, he appointed his brother regent. Pandu died in the woods and Madri the younger wife mounted the funeral pile along with him. Kunti returned with her own sons and the sons of Madri to Dhritarastra at Hastinapur. Dhritarastra had a hundred sons, known under the common appellation of the Kuravas. These however soon grew jealous of the five Pandavas who proved superior to them in all respects. Their jealousy reached such a pitch that they tried to effect the death of their cousins. These were poisoned, thrown into rivers and made to dwell in a house built of inflammable materials which was set on fire, but they contrived to escape. For some time they were given up for lost, but when it came to be known that they were still alive, their uncle, guided by the wise counsel of his ministers, allotted to them a part of his dominions.

The five Pandavas by their prowess extended their conquests over the whole of India, and performed the grand ceremony known as the Rajsuya. This kindled the jealousy of the sons of Dhritarastra. They devised an ingenious stratagem for the ruin of the head of the Pandavas. They knew that Yudhisthir had a passion for dice, and that if he was challenged to play at dice, he would never refuse. So it was arranged that a game of dice should be played between Yudhisthir and Duryodhana, and a strange wager was laid. The wager was that the loser should go into exile for twelve years and should live in secrecy for the whole of that

period, and that if any were seen or discovered before the term expired, he should have to remain in exile for another twelve years. They played with loaded dice and Yudhisthir, losing everything, had to go out into exile with his brothers and their common wife Draupadi. They travelled *incognito* through several parts of India and achieved many wonderful exploits. When they came back, they demanded of their uncle five towns as their patrimony. The Kurus would not part with a single plot of land without war, so war was determined upon.

The war was a most bloody one. It exterminated almost the whole stock of the warriors through the length and breadth of India. The Kurus were all slain. The Pandavas too lost all their sons. All that remained to them was the expectation of a grandchild who was still unborn. Among the survivors there were only two or three generals on the side of the Kurus and on the side of Pandavas a few generals and the five brothers. When Yudhisthir saw these ravages of the war, his heart was so torn with grief that he abdicated the throne, and accompanied by his mother, his brothers and Draupadi, went out into the woods. Here they all dropped down dead one after another excepting Yudhisthir, who was allowed to enjoy the bliss of heaven in his human form.

LXXXIII. DESULTORY READING.

The etymology of the word *desultory* (from the Latin *desultor* = a leaper), will serve clearly to illustrate its meaning. In a Roman circus an equestrian showed his skill as a rider by leaping from one horse to another. He thus rode two or three horses at once, leaping from one to the other and never staying on the back of any one of them long. A desultory reader is, therefore, one who jumps from one study to another, and never continues for any length of time in one pursuit. The evils of this pernicious habit are easy to see.

The first thing we have to consider is, Why do we read books? We read books to acquire knowledge and to gain wisdom. Sometimes indeed we read books for amusement, but this is only a minor use of books. Our main object in reading ought to be to benefit ourselves by the acquisition first of knowledge and then of wisdom. The use of a book consists in its tending to make us wiser, happier, and better. But how can a book yield these important results unless it is fully understood? We must understand, in the first place, what the book contains. Nay more, we must try to enter into the spirit of an author. Very often an author leaves many things to the imagination and the understanding of the reader. He means more things than meet the eye. Hence an active co-operation with the writer is absolutely necessary, if we wish to profit by our study. A desultory

reader is unwilling or unable to put this strain upon his mind. He therefore either fails to grasp what he reads or misunderstands it. He falls into the habit of drawing hasty inferences, thus imbibing lessons very different from what was intended by the author.

All that a desultory reader wants from his books is a momentary excitement or entertainment. Time hangs heavy on his hands, and he wants to kill it, and believes that the pleasantest and the easiest way of killing time is to read books. When a man reads a book with such an object in view, he soon gets tired, and seeks entertainment and excitement from novelty and variety. There are certain occupations which are positively injurious, such as gambling. Desultory reading is better than these. But reading is not a healthy or pleasant occupation by itself. If we are not willing to do any serious work, let us rather go out into the open air and enjoy the sights and sounds of nature. Or let us go about feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and tending the sick. Let us go about studying natural curiosities in museums; let us examine the marvels of fine art exhibited in the galleries of our cities and towns. These occupations will be more pleasurable and profitable than listlessly turning over the pages of a book. Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well. If we must read, let us read with a will and read for a purpose. And where we cannot do this, let us not read at all.

There is another ground also on which desultory reading is to be condemned. A desultory reader gradually loses his power to fix his attention upon anything. If he is called upon to ponder over anything for any length of time, he finds it very irksome. Now attention is absolutely necessary for memory, imagination, and reasoning. So that a desultory reader will remember little, will not be able to conceive exact and distinct images, and will never be able to argue correctly. He will be shallow-minded and inaccurate in all calculations. Such a man will lose much happiness in life.

LXXXIV. SOURCES OF HAPPINESS.

Health is one of the most important sources of happiness. Health is the normal condition of the body, and so long as this condition is maintained, we do not seem to be in want of anything. So long as we have health, we have hope, energy, power for work, and confidence in ourselves. Much of our unhappiness is due to some disorder in our physical functions; but if we are healthy, we feel an exhilaration of spirits which enables us to laugh at the crosses and the failures of life.

Wealth is another source of happiness. Money has little intrinsic worth of its own, but it puts us in a position to

secure comfort and joys without which happiness loses much of its charm. Wealth gives us a sense of security, which is a very important element of happiness. To be in want is to be in the most harassing of anxieties and torments. What will be my condition when I am old and infirm? What will be the condition of my sons and daughters when I am gone? Thoughts of the morrow such as these are fatal to peace and happiness.

Learning is a third source of happiness. Poetry possesses an indefinable charm, which is felt in the furthest recesses of the soul. The pleasures of the intellect are, as is well known, deeper, holier and stronger than the pleasures of the senses. Learning opens our eyes and unfolds before us the marvels of nature, the secret springs of the human heart, the great and wonderful machinery of human society, and the intellectual treasures of former ages. It establishes a link of communication between ourselves and those great and good men of the past whom it is not only a great pleasure, but also a great privilege to know and to honour. Learning widens our sympathies, removes our prejudices, and thus prepares our minds for the reception of that which is true, sublime, beautiful, or good.

The study and pursuit of the fine arts is also a constant source of joy and delight. Painting, sculpture, music, architecture, all afford immense delight to various classes of minds.

Success in any undertaking, literary or political, social or commercial, is a great source of happiness. Success indicates, and is a visible, indisputable proof of power; and the sense of power has a great charm for us. Success even in a game at chess or cards, involving no substantial gain or advantage of any kind, is very delightful. What wonder, then, that success in the serious occupations of life should contribute largely to our happiness?

Domestic bliss is a source of the greatest and purest happiness. A good wife, a promising son, an obedient daughter, a kind father, and a fond mother are sources of perennial and unalloyed joy. The delights of friendship and society belong to this class of pleasures.

Virtue, in which must be included truth, honesty, uprightness, self-control, discipline, benevolence, patriotism, is also a supreme source of happiness. A virtuous man enjoys a peace of mind which by itself would be a fountain of joy. The importance of virtue in this connection is best expressed by the proverb "Virtue is happiness."

It would be impossible to give an exhaustive list of the sources of happiness. We would therefore conclude with the mention of religion, which brings us boundless and indefinable joy. To cast all our cares on God, to look up to Him for comfort, help and guidance in all matters, to meditate upon the

goodness, the loving kindness, and the fatherly care which God bestows upon us all, has ever delighted and will ever delight all right-thinking men, all whose judgment has not been warped by false standards and ignoble ideals of pleasure.

LXXXV. BENGALI LITERATURE.

The first honoured name in Bengali Literature is that of Vidyapati, the Chaucer of Bengali poetry. His subject was the mystical union of Krishna and Radha, their love for each other, their agony when separated, and their ecstasy when brought into each other's embrace. Vidyapati's songs breathe a genuine glow of emotion, and his style is fervid with passion. The style marks also the transition period between Sanskrit and Bengali, and contains a large mixture of Hindu or Brajubuli words.

Next to Vidyapati may be mentioned Chandidas, Govindadas and a few others, who in point of style and sentiments bore a close resemblance to Vidyapati.

The next writer of note was Kristadas Kabiraj, who immortalised himself by his biography of Chaitanya. Kristadas writes in a very simple style, though he knows how to rise into eloquence when occasion requires it. He is a poetic Boswell, and his life of Chaitanya is a *vade mecum* of all genuine Vaishnavas. His style is a nearer approach to modern Bengali than that of his predecessors. He popularised with singular art the most abstruse doctrines of Sanskrit philosophy.

Next came Kirtibas, the translator of the Ramayana into Bengali. Though only a translation, his epic has all the merits of an original work. It affords equal delight to all classes of men, and there are few households in Bengal that do not contain a copy of Kirtibas's immortal work. Though Kirtibas often departed from his original, he has with wonderful tact maintained the spirit of Valmiki in his translation.

What Kirtibas did with Valmiki, Kasidas did with Vyasa's Epic, the great Mahabarat. His translation is as happy as that of Kirtibas, only his style is more poetic, his diction more learned, and his sentiments breathe a warmer glow of passion. Kasidas is as much a universal favourite as Kirtibas.

Mukundaram was also a writer of great genius. He wrote an epic which is known as the Kabikankan Chandi. His poetry is very rich, and he shines as much in graphic delineation as in the invention of new situations and characters. Bengali literature is also largely indebted to Ramprasad, whose divine songs are still household words amongst us. The next poet was Bharat Chandra, who gave the Bengali language a smoothness and elegance which it has always retained. Bharat Chandra's occasional obscenity has to some extent damaged his reputation. But whoever wishes

to acquire the Bengali language must study Bharat Chandra with assiduous care.

With Bharat Chandra closes the rôle of Bengali writers who drew their inspiration from Sanskrit. With the establishment of the English rule in India commences a new era. The writers of this second epoch may be divided into two classes. Those who have merely translated English ideas into Bengali, and those who have imitated the English writers in the domains of fiction, drama, and poetry. Among the former might be mentioned Babu Aukhoy Kumar Datta, and Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. Among the latter, are Michael Madhusudan Datta, Babu Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, and Babu Digabandhu Mitra. These were all men of great culture, and they have enriched Bengali literature with treasures collected from various ages and nations, and also with the brilliant productions of their own genius.

LXXXVI. INSTINCT.

Instinct is held to be an innate force in an animal, which incites it to act in a certain way. In this, it is said, there is no comparison and no choice. If, at times instinct shows signs of choice it is then undistinguishable from reason. A bee for instance will be led by instinct to some particular flowers for honey. A new-born goat was once taken to a room where there were many vessels, some filled with wine, some with milk, some with fruits, and some with grain: the goat smelt them all, but drank up the milk. Some writers suppose this to be an instance of chemical affinity. But there are cases of such wonderful discrimination in even a new-born animal that we can hardly refuse to credit them with reason. A young turtle was once put into a bag and carried to some distance from the shore; it was then taken out of the bag, and its tail was turned towards the open water. But it soon turned about and took the shortest way to the beach without any signs of doubt or hesitation. It is supposed that it could discriminate on which side the air was most humid. This kind of discrimination, if it were found in man, would be dignified with the name of reason; but in animals it is only called instinct, and it is supposed to be a blind mechanical exercise of the reasoning faculty.

It was formerly believed that instinct was unvaried. That is to say, it was supposed that an animal would behave in the same way under every change of its surroundings. This has not been borne out by modern researches and experiments. Thus certain bees were induced to erect a honey-comb on a smooth table. The comb was erected, but every time it was erected, it fell on the table. The bees then erected a proper pillar in an inclined plane, and made the comb lean against it. This is an adaptation of means to ends which can not but be honoured with the title of reason.

The sagacity shown by ants is often wonderful. An ant was one day dragging something very heavy to his nest. This happened to be thicker at one end than at the other, and the shape of it caused a difficulty to arise. For he unhappily lodged it between two bits of wood, through which he found that it would not pass. In this dilemma he acted just as the most ingenious of human beings would have acted. He pulled his heavy load back and turned it on its edge, and then, running to the end, drew it through with ease.

In Benares and in Brindaban apes behave in a way which cannot be accounted for, unless we were to ascribe to them a very superior degree of intelligence. If an unwary pilgrim leaves his *lota* on the beach, while bathing in the river, the ape will carry it up to a tree, and will not part with it till it is fed on rice or plantains. One day an Indian gentleman was walking about the cages of the monkey house in the Zoological Gardens in Calcutta. An ape stealthily took away his shawl from his shoulders. For some time the ape remained quiet, but as the gentleman offered it no food, it began to tear the shawl in pieces.

It is proved beyond a doubt that animals possess almost as much intelligence and reason as some men. They have, too, a language of their own : they hold councils and discuss plans and policies. Some animals have the caste system ; some have regular forms of government ; and every day, with an advance of knowledge, we are coming across fresh and indisputable proofs of animal intelligence and sagacity.

LXXXVII. THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF BENGAL IN GENERAL.

The people of Bengal may be roughly divided into three classes, the richer, the middle, and the poorer classes.

The richer classes are zemindars, bankers, traders, or agriculturists. The zemindars of Bengal are as a class rich and prosperous. The land-revenue which they have to pay to the government is a fixed amount and does not admit of increase. But the revenue or rent which the zemindar collects from his tenants or ryots, admits of great expansion, and generally speaking the rent is enhanced all round every five or six years. In some cases the rent goes down in consequence of epidemics, deaths, droughts, and blights. But these are rather the exception than the rule. The result therefore is that, while a zemindar realises larger sums from his tenants, year after year, the payments which he has to make to the government remain the same. And thus his profits are greater in each succeeding year. The zemindars are mostly Brahmans, Kayasthas, Bailyas, or Mussulmans. The bankers of Bengal are, properly speaking, money-lenders on a large scale. To their depositors they generally pay an interest of six per cent. per

annum. They realise from their debtors interest at no lower rate than fifteen or twenty per cent. This leaves a large margin of profit. The bankers generally are Sahu, Sunris, and the Subachabanika. Sometimes however Brahmans and Kayasthas join their ranks. There are comparatively few traders or merchants in Bengal. In some districts there are rice merchants, who amass vast fortunes in the course of a few years. There are some few who deal in green crops, jute, or hides. The hide merchants are always Mahomedans. In some districts Brahmans and Kayasthas are large agriculturists. But generally it is the inferior castes who follow agriculture. From this account it will be seen that richer classes often include men belonging to very inferior and even low castes.

The middle classes follow a large variety of occupations. In the first place we have the persons employed under Government or Municipal and other local authorities. Some of these men rise to great fame, wealth, and eminence. The subordinate executive service, the police and the engineering departments are most of them recruited from the middle class. The great majority of this class are under-paid and often can hardly make the two ends meet. The second division of the middle class men may be described as professional men. Among them are included pleaders, barristers, attorneys, *gurus*, or preceptors, *purohitas* or priests, contractors, doctors, painters, musicians, munshis or Mahomedan schoolmasters, mullahs or Mahomedan priests, and so on. The successful members of these professions may become very rich; but the rank and file have to struggle with perpetual poverty.

The poorer classes pursue various occupations; the very lowest of these being personal servants, barbers, washermen, sweepers, water-carriers, door-keepers, corpse-bearers, carters, bullock-drivers, and palankin-bearers. The next higher class is that of the artisans and manufacturers, such as, for instance, brick-layers, lime-burners, sawyers, carpenters, thatchers, blacksmiths, braziers, carvers, shell-carvers, makers of garlands, book-binders and the like. The next class is that of tradesmen, and includes petty dealers, grocers, oil-sellers, grain-dealers, glass-vendors, blacksmiths and the like.

LXXXVIII. FAMINES.

The natural calamities destructive of crops in India are—heavy rains, droughts, locusts, field-mice, and birds. Of these the most common are the heavy rains, with the high floods consequent thereon, and the droughts. The floods are prevented by embankments; and droughts are to a large extent remedied by artificial means of irrigation. There are however many districts in Bengal in which no special safeguards against droughts or floods exist, and these suffer most from famines.

The first warnings of a famine are the failure of two crops, successively, followed by droughts or heavy rains. When this happens, prices rise immediately. Rice sells at the rate of 16 seers a rupee in the months of January and February, that is, soon after the harvesting of the winter rice crop. This must be regarded as a warning of approaching scarcity. When rice sells at the rate of 7 or 8 seers a rupee, this must be regarded as a sign of scarcity verging upon famine, for at these rates the majority of the people cannot afford to purchase sufficient for the subsistence of their families, which are generally large. When rice sells at the rate of 3 or 4 seers a rupee, we have a clear case of a famine. For, when prices rise so high, none but the richest can afford to buy sufficient for their maintenance.

Formerly, like plagues, cyclones, and hurricanes, famines were regarded in the light of visitations from God, so that when a famine occurred men submitted to its ravages with resignation, and no one took any steps to mitigate or overcome the distress that it occasioned. As a rule famines were followed by violent epidemics of cholera, small-pox, dysentery, and diarrhoea. Hundreds and thousands of men were carried off, and the sufferings they endured were indescribable. Now however famines have lost much of their horror. There are now great facilities for communication, and as soon as famine is apprehended in one district, people begin to import rice from others, and this alone averts the extremity of distress. Relief works are opened early, and these too have the effect of mitigating the sufferings of the poorer classes. Then subscription lists are opened, generally at the instance of the Government itself, and a mild pressure is brought to bear upon the rich with a view to make them open their purse-strings for the relief of their fellow-men. The Government also does its best to encourage charity and munificence. During the famine of 1866 the Maharaja of Burdwan offered to provide for all the destitute paupers in Burdwan town entirely at his own expense. Six thousand men were daily fed; clothes were distributed to nearly three thousand persons gratuitously; and subsistence money was given to the paupers to enable them to return home. The noble example then set by the Maharaja has since been imitated by hundreds of rich men in our community. And the Government has almost in every case testified its approval of such conduct by conferring on these benefactors of their fellow-men the titles of Rai Bahadur, Raja Bahadur, Raja, C.I.E., C.S.I., and the like. The Government also is always ready to contribute its quota towards the relief of the distressed. This active benevolence on the part of the English, and their tender concern for the poor, will surely draw down upon them the blessings of God; for nothing is more acceptable to God than the feeding of the hungry and the clothing of the naked.

LXXXIX. DELAYS ARE DANGEROUS.

Most things in this life have to be done at the right time or they will not yield the results expected from them. Fields have to be tilled and seeds sown, as soon as the rains set in. If this is not done, you will never get a seasonable opportunity for rectifying your omissions, and your fields will remain fallow till the sowing season of the next year. So in the case of the education of the young. If they are not properly trained up while they are still docile and tractable, they will grow up wild and unruly, and all our efforts to reclaim them, after they have once gone astray, will end in failure and disappointment. It is so too with certain fevers, which take a malignant form if they are neglected in the beginning. In the same way a case of cholera proves fatal, if it is not checked immediately on making its appearance.

In the comparatively lighter concerns of life, the injurious effects of delay are sure to manifest themselves sooner or later. Many families are ruined simply because they fail to attend to their concerns at the right time. They allow their affairs to get muddled, and little by little they are involved in such an inextricable confusion, that at last they are landed in ruin and destitution. Similarly, debts are allowed to accumulate chiefly through delay and procrastination, until they swallow up everything. Again, when a man once begins to buy things on credit, he finds his liabilities increase by leaps and bounds, until at last he finds himself plunged head over ears in debt. Writing letters is a very important matter even from a business point of view. Many fail in business simply because they cannot make up their minds to be punctual in their correspondence. Very often our best friends and our nearest relatives are estranged from us through our delay in replying to their letters. In this way various evils of life, both of a minor and of a fatal character, spring from a habit of procrastination.

Dilatoriness is a mark of inferior understanding; for when a man is of an average intellect, he will have prudence. Prudence means the ability to understand our own interests, and the power to take steps to improve and further them. A man must be declared to be a fool indeed, when he fails to discern the things that are of the utmost importance to him. Dilatoriness is a result of laziness, and laziness is more a defect of the mind than of the body. Moreover dilatoriness is a sign of moral slackness; for when a man has a strong sense of his duties and responsibilities, he can never allow a little laziness to stand between him and his work. A man therefore has little reason to take pride in being dilatory. He must feel that he ought to be ashamed of it, and ought to do his utmost to get rid of the vice.

In the next place we must remember that we are here on our

trial. At any time, without the slightest warning, we may be summoned into the presence of our Maker. Any delay therefore, in preparing ourselves for our last journey may be attended by fatal consequences. Let us therefore seize every opportunity to better ourselves morally and spiritually against the day of judgment. If we put off till to-morrow what we can do to-day, we shall find some day to our surprise that it is too late, and that we are unprepared to stand our trial.

XC. NONE ARE COMPLETELY HAPPY.

Whether a man is happy or not can be determined by himself alone. The outside world are no competent judges in this matter. A man may have all the requisites for happiness. He may have health, intelligence, piety, wealth, power, friends, a loving wife, and good and affectionate children, and yet, if he feels and believes that he is not happy, his statements will have to be accepted without any doubts or misgivings. On the other hand, a man may be labouring under various disadvantages. He may have met with many crosses and disappointments in life. He may not have at his command any of those graces, gifts or blessings which generally lead to happiness, and yet if he believes himself to be happy, we shall have no reason to doubt or disbelieve him.

Now it is a matter of everyday experience, that no one, whatever his position in life may be, ever considers himself to be completely happy. When we begin life, we fix our hearts on certain aims or ends, the attainment of which, we fondly believe, will secure for us continued happiness; but as soon as these ends are achieved, we are naturally impelled to seek some higher ends. In this way, although there is constant endeavour and incessant struggle, happiness seems to be as far off from our grasp as ever.

Then again it is extremely difficult to secure material prosperity by our own efforts. There is a keen competition among the several nations of the world, who are all scrambling for a share in the general distribution of wealth. So the acquisition of wealth depends not only upon our own merits, but also upon our power to defeat and frustrate the endeavours of others. Then the individuals of the same nation are all scrambling for a share in the spoils achieved by the nation in its collective capacity. It is evident from this that those alone who possess some super-eminent qualities can hope to acquire wealth. The number of the successful must therefore be very small indeed, in comparison with those that fail.

Supposing for argument's sake that we have succeeded in amassing wealth, we find that wealth has no absolute power to secure our further happiness. As soon as wealth is in our grasp,

we seek to employ it for some other ends which then appear to us in a captivating light. Some of us seek for more wealth; some for honour and titles; some for a world-wide celebrity; and some for the promotion of the welfare and happiness of mankind. Our efforts and struggles thus never cease. They are only directed into new and different channels.

There are again some who cannot be happy unless they can effect a reform in their morals and character. They find very great difficulty in achieving their ends. Moral improvement is such an arduous undertaking, that a life-long labour is hardly adequate to fully secure it, and even when we have devoted our whole life to it, we find that our progress has been but limited.

Thirdly, our happiness does not depend upon ourselves alone. On every side we are surrounded by friends, relatives, subordinates or dependents. We cannot be happy unless we find them all fulfilling the expectations we have formed of them. If our brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, friends and dependents turn out to be different from what we wish them to be, our happiness may be shattered in spite of the material or moral prosperity that we may have accomplished for ourselves. And if any of them are plunged into sorrow or affliction, or if any of them are carried off by the cruel hand of death, then again our happiness may come to a sudden end. If again we are interested in the welfare of our fellow-creatures, any calamity that befalls our society, or country, or humanity at large, will damp our happiness, and we shall feel as keen a misery as if we had met with a personal loss. We can at the most control our actions, but hardly can we hope to make the whole world subservient to our wishes and interests.

As we are at present constituted complete happiness seems then to be unattainable. And if we were to think of it, this would seem to be the wisest arrangement possible. For such happiness or contentment would paralyse our efforts, and would thus put a stop to all future progress. It is evidently God's intention that we should always struggle, for in struggle alone lies all hopes of self-improvement.

XCI. FAME.

A passion for fame is almost universal in the human race. Even the most unworthy of us cherish a secret longing for the praise and approbation of others. We may defy public opinion, and may affect to treat with indifference the judgments which our neighbours may pass upon us; but yet, in spite of all this, we have a strong yearning to be thought and spoken well of by others. The desire for fame is an irresistible impulse: it is, in the words of Milton, the "last infirmity of noble minds."

There are many who hold that the desire for fame is a selfish instinct, and that it is therefore as little to be commended as a desire for wealth or rank: they hold it to be nothing less than a glorification of self. It is however a nobler form of self-gratification. All selfishness is not to be equally condemned. There is a kind of refined selfishness in the golden maxim—"Do to others as you would have them do to you." In the same way the self-seeking which a desire for fame implies has little that is base or ignoble in it. Let us judge of it by its consequences upon our life and conduct; for, after all, a tree is best known by its fruits. Now if we wish to win the approbation of others, the first thing that we have to do is to restrain ourselves from all such actions as are dishonest, dishonourable, mean or contemptible. This restraint is a high type of virtue, and it does not cease to be a virtue because it has its root in self. Then fame impels us to undertake actions which are in themselves great and glorious. This also is no little gain. As Addison remarks—"the principle may be faulty or defective, but the consequences it produces are so good, that for the benefit of mankind it ought not to be extinguished." Milton in one of his sublime utterances says that even devils sometimes do good out of a desire for fame. Certainly those who work for fame are inferior to those who "do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame"; but, all the same, to do good even for fame alone is better than not to do it at all. Whatever saves us from evil doing has a high value, and there can be no denying that the love of fame has this value.

Some have a notion that permanent fame may be acquired without genuine merit. This is a misconception. In this world of ours even genuine and substantial worth is often ignored and passed by. The appearance of worth therefore, where the real substance is wanting, has no chance of obtaining lasting fame. Just as tinsel may for a day or two pass for gold, and just as tinsel is sure to be estimated at its true worth in the long run, so counterfeit worth may deceive for a time, but is sure to be detected sooner or later. Those that wish for permanent fame, not for an ephemeral publicity, must strive to acquire solid excellence. There is no eye like the world's eye; and the world will respect those who deserve respect. Let us then, first of all, devote our sole attention to acquire real excellence, and then we shall be able to exclaim with Bhavabuti:—"Some one will surely be born who will have the same tastes and feelings with myself, for time is eternal and this world is illimitable."

The best attitude of mind for the attainment of fame is therefore an attitude of indifference towards fame. Let us work with a will and with vigour and earnestness, but let us not be eager for fame itself. Pope's lines are worthy of remembrance:

Nor fame I slight, nor for her favours call,
She comes unlooked for, if she comes at all.

To which may be added :—

Unblemished let me live or die unknown ;
Oh ! grant an honest fame, or grant me none.

XCII. THE BENEFITS OF COMMERCE.

There is a couplet in Sanskrit which compares the relative advantages of agriculture, commerce, and service. It says, "The goddess of wealth resides in commerce ; the profits of commerce are double the gains of agriculture. Agriculture brings us an income twice as large as service. Begging is no good." As it is with individuals so it is with nations. The commercial manufacturing nations, *e.g.*, England and America, are the richest on earth. And wealth brings not only comforts and convenience, but also power and glory, arts and refinements, culture and civilisation. The agricultural nations, *e.g.* France and Italy, are not nearly so rich as their commercial sisters.

Commerce, though it is so profitable to individuals and to particular nations, is not a means of adding to the wealth of the world. Commerce does not *produce* wealth. It merely effects an exchange between the products of one country and those of another. As Addison puts it, commerce brings into a country all that it wants, and carries out of it whatever is superfluous. This is a very important service to mankind. If we were to depend upon our own resources we should fare but badly. In Bengal, for instance, there are some rice-producing districts, which can grow more rice than they can consume ; and there are some cotton-producing districts which grow cotton in superfluous abundance. Now if there were no traffic or commerce between the two districts, the inhabitants of one district would go without food, and those of the other without clothing. As it is in internal traffic, so it is in foreign commerce. Nature disseminates her blessings among the different regions of the world with almost an impartial hand, so that the several parts of the globe have a kind of dependence upon one another. "The food," says Addison, in his charming style, "often grows in one country and the sauce in another. The fruits of Portugal are corrected by the products of Barbadoes, and the infusion of a China plant is sweetened by the pith of an Indian cane. . . . The brocade petticoat rises out of the mines of Peru and the diamond necklace out of the bowels of Hindoostan." The use of commerce becomes manifest in days of famine and scarcity. To a famine-stricken people commerce comes like a messenger of heaven, arresting the uplifted hand of death.

But yet commerce is not without its evils. It fosters a desire for pomp and luxury, and luxury, as is well known, is accom-

panied by effeminacy and degeneration. Commerce may therefore be the innocent cause of bringing about the downfall of a nation. Furthermore, commerce sets up rivalry and antagonism between one mighty nation and another, antagonism which sometimes ends in immense loss of life and property. In the third place, commerce is very often the pretence for extending conquests and for enslaving foreign nations. As Setewayo said, on one occasion, "First comes the Traveller; then the Missionary; then the Merchant; and lastly the Soldier. When the Soldier comes, there is an end of the blacks." There can be no doubt that commerce is largely responsible for this state of things.

Formerly the balance of trade was entirely in our favour. That is to say, other nations bought the products of our country, but we never bought their products. Hence we got nothing but money in exchange for our articles. But now we get in return for our exports a large assortment of the products of other countries. That is to say, we now get, instead of money, clothes, glass-ware, knives and scissors, books and various other articles of luxury and comfort. This may at first seem to be a loss; but commerce has so expanded in India, that even in respect of money we get much more than we used formerly. This state of things may best be illustrated by arithmetical figures. Let us suppose that formerly our exports amounted to 6 Rs. and imports were nil. The balance of trade in our favour was 6 Rs. But now our exports let us say amount to 20 Rs. and our imports to 10 Rs. The balance of trade in our favour is 10 Rs., a sum much higher than what we used to make in the earlier days of our commerce. This has caused an influx of wealth into our country, the signs of which are manifest on all sides. We are only producers now, but if we could manufacture as well as produce, with the help of English machinery, and under the guidance of English skill, commerce would be to us simply a mint of money.

XIII. CONTENTMENT.

This virtue has justly been likened to the philosopher's stone. It dissipates pain and care and melancholy, and changes every place into a kind of heaven. As Addison says, "It extinguishes all murmur, destroys all inordinate ambition, gives sweetness to our conversation, and a perpetual serenity to our thoughts." The Sanskrit proverb adds—"One who is contented is always happy."

Addison mentions some methods by the help of which we may acquire the virtue of contentment. Let us in the first place remember that we have much more than we want. It is very foolish always to think of what we have not. If instead of thinking of those who are richer, or more powerful, or more

gifted than ourselves, we were to think of those others who are less fortunate than we are, we should have good reason to be contented with our lot.

Secondly, let every man consider that he might have been much more unhappy than he really is. Addison tells the story of an honest Dutchman who, upon breaking his leg by a fall, remarked to the by-standers it was a great mercy that it was not his neck. Addison also relates the story of Dr Hammond, who, when he had the gout upon him, said "I thank God it is not the stone." And when he had the stone he thanked God that he had not both these distempers on him at the same time.

Religion is another source of contentment. Whatever our condition may be on this earth below, we are sure to get our deserts at the hands of God after death. God will judge us not by our rank, wealth, or fame, but by our faith and our love for Him and our fellow-men. He will exact from us the utmost uprightness, truth, goodness and piety. So long as we be not wanting in these, let us be indifferent to what men consider as objects of happiness on this earth below.

The shortness of life should also inspire us with a feeling of contentment. Let us remember that death will surely step in between us and our petty aims. Within a few years the king and the beggar will occupy the same level, and though the one will be talked about for a few days, utter silence will descend upon both equally before long. Why then this unrest?

But contentment, like most other virtues, is only a short step from the corresponding fault, and unless carefully watched and purified, it may easily degenerate into indifference and indolence. We have our duties to perform—duties to ourselves, to our country, to our family, to our God, and to the world in general. We must perform these duties faithfully and conscientiously. Let us exert ourselves to the utmost; let our efforts for the promotion of our own good and, for the good of the world, be never slackened. Our contentment must not take the form of sloth or pessimism. Let it draw us away from the ignoble pursuits of life: let it teach us to refrain from wasting our lives in idle regrets and unavailing sorrows: let it teach us to rise above petty envies and jealousies: but let it at the same time teach us to fix our hearts on higher ends and pursuits. Let us under its teachings learn to live for others and for God.

XCIV. CUSTOM.

Whatever is practised habitually is a custom. Custom has also an idea of artificiality about it. That is to say, when we do a thing habitually, not from the promptings of nature, but from some other cause, such as a voluntary choice, or an accidental combination of circumstances, we call it a custom. So custom

means a habit generated by the frequent repetition of an act which we are not called upon to do by any prompting of nature.

A custom, though it has not its roots in nature, is as irresistible as a natural instinct. "Custom," says the proverb, "is a second nature." The force of custom was very well illustrated in the life of a certain thief. The thief fell in with some saints, and he began to lead a pure life. But stealing had become to him a custom. At certain hours of the night, when everybody was asleep, he would get up and steal now a loaf of a tree, now a brick-bat, now a twig, and so on. Of course this was merely playing at stealing, but yet the going through the process, although for no earthly object of any kind, was to him a source of satisfaction. When a custom has assumed this form, it becomes quite irresistible. It obtains the force of a natural appetite, and entirely subdues our will to it.

The next point of importance in regard to custom is that it makes all things easy and pleasant. "Custom," says the proverb, "turns a rock into a bed of down." Opium is very bitter, yet custom not only takes away its bitterness, but adds to it some positive relish or flavour. And as it is with the body, so it is with the mind. There are certain intellectual works which at first appear extremely tedious or irksome to us. But as soon as we are accustomed to them, they become to us not only easy, but even delightful.

There is nothing virtuous or vicious in custom itself. Custom has a peculiar power over the mind. Just as we do not blame fire for yielding to water, so it would be absurd to blame the mind for its obedience to custom. Allow the mind to act or to be acted upon in a particular way for some days, and it will go on acting in that way spontaneously. And this is custom. Custom may therefore be employed as an instrument of good or evil according as we wish. It is perfectly in our power to reach high intellectual or moral excellence through the help of custom; and it is perfectly in our power to fall into sin through the force of the same agency. As Pythagoras said, "Choose that course of life which is the most excellent, and custom will render it the most delightful." On the other hand indulgence in vice will quickly transform us into hardened sinners.

As it is with individuals, so it is with nations. After a certain time an individual gets accustomed to a practice, and follows it mechanically, without troubling himself to inquire whether the practice is conformable to reason or not. So a nation or society, after following a certain practice for some years, falls into the habit of doing it mechanically, without ever asking itself why it should do so. In the beginning every practice is intended to confer some real or imaginary good. But after some years its original purpose is forgotten, and the thing continues to be done simply because it has been done so often. It is in this way

that a custom comes to be observed and obeyed even when it has ceased to be rational or advantageous. When the Hindus first settled in India, early marriage was a necessity, because their very existence depended upon the increase of population. Now however the same necessity does not exist, and early marriage has become an unreasonable and a mischievous custom. Sometimes we come across horrible and ludicrous customs, the origin of which we cannot easily account for. Yet these customs, however monstrous or absurd they may now appear, must have had some meaning at first, and must have had a beneficial tendency. The mistake lies in perpetuating a custom which has lost its usefulness.

XCV. "ZEAL.

Zeal is a passionate ardour in the pursuit of any object. If we have zeal for a cause, we shall look upon it as one of the first objects of life, nay more, we may feel an all-absorbing interest in it, and magnify its importance till it appears to be the supreme and sole end of human existence.

When we have such an exaggerated idea of the importance of a cause, we shall most assuredly do our utmost to further it and regardless of aught besides, to lead it on to a successful issue. A zealous man will thus live in a world of his own and will be unmindful of all that lies outside it. It will be evident that zeal is almost always the safest guarantee of success. It involves a firm determination and a persistent and untiring effort, and every one knows that these are the two necessary elements of success. You may have the brightest of parts; you may have a quick intelligence, a retentive memory, and a fertile invention; but if you have not zeal, they are wasted. On the other hand mediocre talents and the most ordinary intelligence will accomplish wonders with the aid of zeal. All the progress and all the reforms in life have been achieved through zeal. Zeal rouses and animates our whole nature, gives us definiteness of aim and ensures persistent and persevering effort. What wonder then that it should overcome difficulties and achieve success?

But zeal has its dangers. It puts too heavy a strain upon our physical and mental constitution. We are always on fire. And this must necessarily tell upon our health and throw the mind off its balance. Thus, too much zeal may derange the mental powers before their time or cause premature death. Undue excitement and over-pressure are sometimes our worst enemies, and we must not allow our zeal to rush into these wild excesses. Then again zeal is often blind. It is so engrossed in itself that it has no eyes for anything else. The beauties of nature, the graces and refinements of life are unnoticed by it. Its sympathies are narrow, and it can take interest only in those few objects which immediately concern it. Its judgment is one-sided and there-

fore hasty and inaccurate. Its mind, its heart and soul run in a narrow groove, so that it is practically debarred from the various pleasures and attractions of life. A man of excessive zeal is therefore likely to become unsocial, dogmatic, and self-satisfied. He understands nobody and nobody understands him. He thus leads an isolated life, unable to receive consolations and unable to impart joys.

This narrowness of mind and heart, if it is not checked in time, is likely to end in intolerance and cruelty. A zealous partisan in politics or a zealous bigot in religion will often stick at nothing. He will not hesitate to advance his cause by cruel tyranny or by treachery. The worst persecutors of the world have been zealous bigots. They probably act from the best of motives ; but yet their judgment is so warped that they often mistake cruelty for mercy and intolerance for reason. Zeal is therefore a very dangerous weapon in its extreme development, but so long as it is confined within the domains of reason and conscience, and so long as it does not end in bigotry, cruelty and intolerance, it yields results of the very highest importance.

XCVI. CHARACTER.

Character is one of the most important elements of success. If we make a list of successful men, that is, of men who have acquired a high degree of proficiency in their respective vocations, of men who have advanced the cause of progress and civilisation in society, of men whose memory is cherished with affection and gratitude, we shall find that the majority of these owed their success to some points of moral excellence in their character. It might be truth, honesty, uprightness, devotion to duty, or perseverance ; but without the aid of some such virtues no success is attainable. And as it is with individuals so it is with nations. So long as a nation has character, it remains invincible ; with the aid of its character it establishes its sway ; but as soon as this character is lost, everything is lost. No culture, no grace, no refinement, no civilisation can save it from ruin and destruction.

Character alone makes us worthy. A man's worth is rightly estimated not by what he has, but by what he is. When our career on earth closes, we are praised or blamed by our fellow-men according as we possessed a high or a low character. And religion teaches us that when we shall stand our trial before the high tribunal of our Heavenly Judge, we shall stand or fall by our moral worth, and not by our wealth, rank, or any other standard of worldly greatness. Character is thus our best friend not only on earth below, but also in heaven above.

It is character which alone can give us real happiness. Character places us above the caprices of fickle fortune, and gives

us an invaluable treasure of its own. It gives us that mental peace and that inner satisfaction without which no real happiness is possible. A man of character has self-control, self-knowledge and self-respect. His mind is a kingdom to him. He cheerfully resigns himself to the lot which God assigns him. He discharges his duties faithfully. He shrinks from anything which has in it the slightest mixture of disgrace or dishonour. Solidity of character conduces to good health; the temperance of youth is rewarded by cheerfulness and placidity in old age.

To a very large extent character is the result of circumstances. The influences which go to mould character may be set forth thus:—(1) Our parents transmit to us moral traits, which remain with us through life. We inherit not only features and complexion, not only estates and fortune, but also the virtues and the vices of our parents. We see every day around us sons afflicted with the same bodily diseases which their parents had, and we inherit in an equal degree their mental diseases and shortcomings. (2) The peculiar characteristics of race are also sure to develop and manifest themselves in us, in a more or less marked degree. The Aryans, the Semites, the Mongolians, and the Negrites have all their distinctive traits, and all have a share in the common inheritance of racial virtues and vices. (3) The climate and the natural aspects of the country in which we live, have also a great influence on our minds and morals. Thus the members of the same stock or race, living in two different climates, will after some time exhibit different characteristics. The practical conclusion to be drawn from all this is, that we are not altogether our own masters in this matter of moral progress. We have to start with certain advantages or disadvantages, as the case may be.

It must, however, be remembered that we have *some* hand in the formation of our own character. How great may be the extent of our power in moulding our own moral being is a subject lengthy enough for separate treatment.

XCVII. HEROISM.

(THE IDEAS PARTIALLY TAKEN FROM KINGSLEY.)

Among the Greeks of Homer's time, a hero was a man who was like the gods. As in the case of the gods, a hero was expected to have beauty, strength, manners, eloquence, and all the outward perfections of humanity. He was also expected to have justice, self-restraint, self-respect, and modesty. He was further required to be a deliverer, a destroyer of evil. But over and above all this, the hero was required to be endowed with self-sacrifice, which Kingsley calls the perfection of heroism. Among many other virtues, then, heroism was bound to contain a large element of self-sacrifice.

The next element of heroism may be described as simplicity. A hero must be above all affectation and all conceit. A hero never thinks of himself, of his prospects in this world. He works with a single eye to duty, simply because it must be done, and not because it will pay him or raise him in the estimation of the world. Viewed in this light, the most essential requisite of heroism is devotion to duty. You must do your duty in the first place. There can be no heroism, if duty is ignored or neglected.

The first duty of every man is towards the wife whom he has married and the children whom he has brought into the world. To neglect them is not heroism, but the opposite. Do your duty to them for its own sake, even when unobserved, and not for the approbation or applause of your fellow-men. Women in this sense are more heroic than men. For men live, and must live, in the glare and noise of the outer world, while it is a womanly instinct to hide good deeds as long as may be possible. She who nurses a bedridden mother, or spends her heart and her money on a drunken father or a reckless brother, is a heroine and a heroine of the truest type. And the mother—is not she a heroine almost every moment of her life? What sacrifices does she not make for the good or supposed good of her children? As Kingsley says, "This dark world looks bright, this diseased world looks wholesome, when we reflect that this world is full of mothers."

Kingsley mentions two instances of heroism in common life. John Halifax, the hero of the well-known story by Miss Mulock, had only one ambition, the ambition to behave like a *gentleman* in every station and in every business. This made and kept him heroic through all the stages of his life. The second instance of a heroic character is Esmond. Esmond held fast throughout to honour, duty and virtue. Let us do the duties that lie nearest to us; let us never be false, never mean, and never cruel, and we shall be entitled to take our rank among heroes.

Certain times are favourable to the growth of certain sorts of heroism. The middle ages with their chivalric ideals were congenial to noble and heroic virtues. It was then the fashion to love and to imitate and even to affect heroism. Every one feared dishonour and falsehood as worse than death. Poverty was no reproach. It is not so easy in this more prosaic age to be heroic in our aims and aspirations; but yet we should strive to keep high ideals, for they alone enoble life and make it worth living. Duty is always within sight, if we will use our eyes.

XXVIII. SUPERSTITION.

Superstition may be roughly defined as the observance of rites or ceremonies, and the entertainment of beliefs and opinions, which are neither recommended by reason, nor enjoined by

religion. The chief motives of superstitious practice are the fear of some unknown evil and the expectation of some unknown bliss.

Let us examine some cases of superstition with a view to illustrate its scope and meaning. Among the superstitious beliefs and practices of the ancients might be mentioned the following:—If a weasel crossed a man's path he would stop and throw three pebbles into the road. He dared not sit on a tomb, lest he should hasten his own death. When he saw an epileptic patient, he would spit into his own bosom. Addison mentions some of the superstitious practices of his own time, how the spilling of salt meant an evil omen, how the placing the knife and the fork one upon the other was looked upon as inauspicious; and how a child was never sent to school on a Thursday, and so on. But India has always encouraged superstitious practices beyond most countries. Here a man's life is rounded with superstitions. For instance, when a man goes out on business, he seeks and welcomes certain signs, and avoids certain others. If he sees a corpse or a jackal on his left, a cow, or an antelope, or a Brahman, on his right; or if he sees a king, a flag, or a wreath of flowers in front of him, he believes that his mission will succeed. But if he sees on his left what he ought to have seen on his right or *vice versa*, he is dejected and depressed with fears of failure. An oilman, or a *Khosla*, *i.e.*, a man who does not possess a moustache or a beard when he is old enough to have both, an albino, and a leper are very bad omens. Anyone carrying a full pitcher on the head is an evil omen; but if we see an empty pitcher, it is equally a bad sign. If one calls you from behind, or if you hear the 'tic-tac' sound of a lizard, or if you hear a person sneeze, you must postpone your journey; and you must do the same, if your head or brow strikes against anything, or if you stumble. Some superstitions are utterly absurd; for instance, if a man happens to come in contact with you while you are dosing, he must be thrown on the ground and kicked seven times. If a man touches you with his hair, you must pull him by the hair and compel him to utter the formula—"Om, Sreekesava." Again, if a man sneezes upon the body of another, the sneezer is requested to pinch the body of the man sneezed upon, and he must utter the formula—"I have sneezed upon the body of a black dog." These are harmless, though absurd rites, but others may be mentioned which are positively injurious and immoral. Here, as everywhere else, the great ambition of a woman's life is to win the love of her husband. Of course, the best way of accomplishing this purpose, is possessing or acquiring certain bodily, mental or moral charms. When a woman does not possess these, she has recourse to various drugs and herbs to work upon the unfortunate husband. These drugs and herbs should be gathered or plucked under curious circumstances. A moonlight night is

chosen, and the wife with her hair dishevelled goes out, unaccompanied by anybody else. The effect of these drugs is in most cases extremely disastrous. Sometimes they drive the poor man mad; sometimes they induce a most virulent type of diarrhoea, which carries him off in the prime of his manhood. Sometimes when a baby is ill, it is dedicated to a god or goddess, and no steps are taken for its cure. In some cases the child gets well, but in many others it pines and dies. Instances of similar catastrophes, brought on by superstitions of this kind, might be multiplied to any extent.

There is only one remedy against superstitious practices and beliefs. We must never forget that good and evil are not a matter of chance. Everything in this life obeys law. Success and failure, good fortune and misfortune are determined by our own actions, and not by irrelevant accidents. Moreover, we must rely on God, and leave everything in his hands. Let us only do our duty and trust in God, and superstition will lose all its power and influence.

XCIX. CLEANLINESS.

Cleanliness is a great promoter of health. In the first place it assists digestion by helping a quick and free circulation of the blood. When there is an equable current of blood directed towards the stomach, the process of digestion must be greatly facilitated. Moreover, when cold water is poured over the skin it begets a kind of genial and agreeable warmth within, which helps all our vital processes. Then, when the body is properly washed and rubbed over with a towel, anything which clogged the pores of the skin is removed and the impurities of the system pass out through them in the shape of perspiration. When a man is unwashed the pores of his skin become choked up, so that the impurities, being unable to flow out, pass backwards into the vital parts of the system, begetting various diseases. Health is one of the most essential elements of happiness. So it is evident that cleanliness is a great source of happiness.

The inhabitants of India are, in points of personal cleanliness, in the front rank among all the nations of the world. For the daily morning bath is with Indians the rule rather than the exception; while there are some parts of the earth where the inhabitants very rarely, perhaps only once a year, wash the whole of the body. Hindus and Mahomedans practise cleanliness as a religious duty. According to the Hindus, an ablution or a bath must precede worship. Among the Mahomedans too, *agn*, or the washing of the face, the hands, the feet, etc., is absolutely necessary before prayer.

Although the washing of the body is so common, yet many are very unmindful of their dress. Mahomedans, when they can

afford it, are more careful about their dress than Hindus. The latter often allow themselves to be dirty and untidy in this respect. Hindus are also sometimes negligent of their bedding. They are very neat and clean when they have to worship their gods, but in other occasions they regard it as mere foppery to practise cleanliness. But the effects of habitual uncleanness are not counterbalanced by a few minutes' cleanliness. We should observe cleanliness at all times and in all our surroundings.

Cleanliness gives an air of respectability. We can with difficulty conceive any respect for those who show any signs of dirt in their person or dress. But as soon as we see an attempt at cleanliness, we are pleased and favourably impressed. Long dirty nails, unkempt hair, an unshaved chin, are sights disagreeable to all. A babe may be lovely in face and shape, but if it is not clean we do not wish to take it in our arms or to kiss it. As Addison says, "Beauty produces love, but cleanliness preserves it."

It is, of course, inevitable that some occupations should make the person and the dress dirty for a time. Some games also, football for instance, can hardly be played without covering the clothes with mud. But there is here no offence against cleanliness, if care be taken to change the clothes for clean ones, and to have a good wash as soon as possible after the work or the game is over.

C. THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER.

In giving advice as to the formation of character the first place must be assigned to the education of the will. Socrates said, "Virtue is knowledge." But practical experience has not borne this out. As the Latin poet says :—

I see the right, and I approve it too,
Condemn the wrong, and yet the wrong pursue.

In fact, knowledge cannot save us when we have to meet face to face the trials and the temptations of life. We have to take help from our conscience and our will, which restrain us from vice and impel us towards what is good. Our knowledge must raise in us certain emotions of a noble type, which we must exercise the will to carry out, and then alone may we expect some practical reform of character. A good man is above all things not so much a man of intellect as a man of good feelings. A poet for this reason is a better educator than a philosopher. The latter convinces our reason, but the former kindles our earnestness and enthusiasm. Good feelings act as inward impulses which give us no rest till we make some advance towards the goal on which we fix our eyes. Knowledge often ends in talk and in learned discussions; but conscience is like a goad which drives us on towards those higher paths of life which in our best moments we would mark out for ourselves.

The best way to educate our feelings is to set up before us, while we are yet young, some noble or lofty ideals which we can admire or imitate. Heroic ideals, which might be called object-lessons, of purity, generosity, self-sacrifice, benevolence, and self-control ought to be placed before the admiring gaze of young men, and they will gradually and unconsciously assimilate into their own nature the purity and the nobility they behold before them. Books like Plutarch's *Lives* are of inestimable value; but when low and sordid ideals are held up before us, character degenerates, and we sink into the level of those with whom we mentally associate.

A practical exercise of virtue is also very effective in inducing a moral frame of mind. Let us feed the hungry, clothe the naked, tend the sick, comfort the afflicted, soften the envious, and quiet the angry. No faculties are developed without exercise, and this holds true of moral as much as of intellectual qualities. If then we wish to strengthen our moral nature, we cannot do better than practise good from our earliest youth. Custom is a second nature, and habitual exercise of virtue will make virtue delightful to us. It will then be difficult for us not to practise virtue.

Contemplation of the divine attributes will also be of great help to us in the formation of character. God is the purest fountain of the noblest and sublimest virtues. He is kind, loving, merciful, just, and benevolent. We cannot contemplate these virtues without partaking of them. Moreover, the knowledge that God will punish us for our misdeeds tends to keep us in the strict path of duty and uprightness. That virtue will secure us the blisses of paradise is another inducement to the formation of character. Among the means of strengthening and elevating character might further be mentioned—association with holy men, the perusal of choice books, an effort to be true and sincere in all things, a desire for the applause of our fellow-men, self-respect, a fear of public opinion, and last, though not least, a desire for unblemished renown in ages to come.

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